

転生したら ドラゴンの 卵だった

最強以外

目指さねえ

4

猫子
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ILLUSTRATION
NAJI柳田



Reincarnated as a Dragon's Egg

~Lets Aim to Be the Strongest~

- Volume 4 -

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[dsrealm translations]

Chapter 147

What Now

I look up and jump up in a straight line.

I could see a herd of hyenas migrating in the distance. It's the first time I've flown so high.

The weight of my body was starting to take toll and my ascension speed gradually slowed down.

Not yet, I can still fly up.

After finally coming to a stop in the air I looked over my surroundings. Most of what I saw was just sand. No ships or other islands could be seen on the ocean. Even if there were just migratory birds would give me a little hope, but nothing.

Is there seriously no other city around besides that walled city. Should I try looking around a little more?

I flap my wings but I don't rise in altitude. Looks like my momentum from jumping has already disappeared, and it looks like I can't rise anymore with the strength of my wings alone. Not only did I fly all the way to my limit but I also managed to break my posture.

I need to recover, this is actually a pretty risky situation. When I thrust my center of gravity to the left to fix myself, my body turned over. Due to my impatience it backfired, this is dangerous. I was awkwardly falling while flailing my limbs around.

After magnificently crashing down on my shoulder raising a sand cloud, I slowly rose. It was a good thing I had [Fall Resistance].

Without that, it may have been the end of me.

While I was falling I happen to catch a glimpse of that one soldier captain who had attacked me before in the distance.

What was his name... bald? Dutz? It looked like it straddled a three headed camel with something. I was uneasy as to whether he would be able to escape safely after the horse ran away, but it seems my worry was unneeded. I think that camel was pretty slow but... I think that bald man will be able to make it alright.

“pefu?”

「What, was there something?」

With the thought in my head sent with [Telepathy] I shook my head. This is troubling. If we don't find another city soon I will have to send Nina back to that walled city.

Nina was watching over mine and the ball rabbits conversation with uneasiness. I better explain the situation to Nina. I need to tell her about my [Dragon Scale Powder], and about the plan to find a good place for her since I can't stay together for a long time. I also need to raise my skill level, I should explain this with [Human Transformation].

Lets see, the amount of time I could spend as a human is.....

[Irushia]

Race: Evil Plague Dragon

State: Normal

Lv: 44/75

HP: 302/344

MP: 237/237

Alright, 237 seconds... that's almost four minutes.

The conversation will be smoother than before, and that should be enough. Although, I'd like to at least leave around 50 MP. Also, if I'm not able to explain everything in time, I can just have the ball rabbit be the translator like always. I can just ask it to use [Telepathy] from the start but I also want to talk to people occasionally.

“gurua”

I give a low growl to get Nina's and the ball rabbits attention. After making eye contact with Nina I use [Human Transformation].

As before, my whole body heats up and compresses to human size. At first I almost fainted due to the heat and pain but now I'm used to it. I hope the duration and my appearance is better. I can still only call myself half lizardman and half human.

Nina guessing that I wanted to talk to her, looked over to the ball rabbit and made a firm expression before going in front of me. No, you don't need that much resolution to face me... You can at least trust me a bit more.

"I have miasma, Nina being here will poison. We can't be together for long. Need to find somewhere to put you, but this place unfamiliar. If this continues, I will have to go to that city you were before." (Irushia)

"....." (Nina)

"You have somewhere? I know that place bad, but we may have to go to the wall city." (Irushia)

This is a similar question I've asked before. When I asked last time I was told that there was no place to go, but I need to reconfirm it. If I tell her the situation how it is and show that there are no other options there is a chance that a place she was silent about before will come out.

Even returning to that walled city won't be possible right away. If we continue to travel with no destination then we will have to leave you in the desert or the [Dragon Scale Powder] curse will kill you. I need to take her somewhere before then.

After hearing my words, Nina's ears hang down and her head slowly follows suit..... If only there was more time to spend searching, but we are running short on options.

Me and Nina were not saying anything to each other, just standing face to face. Since my MP will run out at this rate I need to say something.

"...Body will fall ill with curse, should have said earlier." (Irushia)

It was confirmed with the ball rabbit that after sometime an abnormal status will appear on their body. When the ball rabbit was coughing, the status was still normal.

"Pefu!"

The ball rabbit suddenly cried out. Nina looked towards the ball rabbit and after

looking it in its eyes started gently stroking the ball rabbits head. Nina then makes a small nod and turns to me. I wonder what he said with [Telepathy].

“.....along the coast, where we went straight before, there is a small port city closer than Haranae.” (Nina)

The direction is opposite to the walled city. So that walled city was called Haranae? I saw that name show up a lot on the status of those soldiers.

A port city huh.....

Perhaps Nina and the other beastmen were brought to this continent by ship and it's likely that they were on their way to Haranae by carriage from there. If so, even if we go to that port town, Nina's treatment won't be too great...

“Umm, uhh the port city is close, and my body is still fine, So I can... move slowly...” (Nina)

Slowly?

Has the speed so far been a burden on her? I tried to keep it steady as much as possible.

“...Returning to that port city... I will be caught again... so until then... I'd like to travel slowly with Mr. Dragon, I won't be a burden will I...? (Nina)

“...Umm, yeah, we can do that” (Irushia)

“Th-Thank you very much nya!” (Nina)

I back up a few steps and release [Human Transformation] before Nina finished talking. My body expands and returns to its original dragon form. After changing back I quickly turn my back towards Nina and the ball rabbit.

I suddenly released [Human Transformation] not because of a lack of MP, it was still at about half. It was because I didn't want them see the tears coming out of my eyes. Although I turned back into a dragon, the tears didn't stop.

Is there anything else I could do instead of delivering Nina to the port city or Haranae? Whether it's the port city or Haranae, Nina's treatment there will be the same. That fat man who was kicking Nina and her fellow beastmen out of the carriage and laughing

as they became monsters food is still fresh in my mind.

I won't even be able to stick around to see what becomes of Nina after separating. Even if she were to enter the port city, there is a possibility that she will be killed anyway. If it's going to be like that, then is there any meaning to what I'm doing?

I fought the huge centipede by risking my life, and looking at the result, did I just help that fat man?

"...Mr. Dragon?"

Nina asked me a question behind me, but I couldn't look back.

Chapter 148

The Least

Walking along the beach with the ball rabbit and Nina on my back, we head towards the port city which is further up ahead.

Respecting Nina's wish to enjoy slowly traveling, the speed is considerably slow. I had thought that it wouldn't be suitable to sightsee with the unchanging desert, but the sea is okay. The ball rabbit and Nina gaze over the ocean while on my back.

When I looked to the side I could see a three headed camel resting in the distance. Alright! Aren't I super lucky. Not only is it really delicious but it has plenty of water inside it. Not only that it's also just sitting there like a sitting duck, isn't that great. I have to move slowly here so that I don't scare away our meal.

"gurua"

I growl lightly to let the two on my back know my plan, then let them hold on so that we could go.

I crouch low so as not to be detected, that way I could take out the three headed camel with one strike. It will be easy enough to take out, I just need to bite into it a little bit.

"pefu!"

「I'm going to run, hold on so we could eat」

"Nya~ okay!"

The ball rabbit used [Telepathy] to tell Nina what I wanted. After answering Nina held on with her arms, and the ball rabbit held onto my back with its ears. I then dash towards the three headed camel aiming for its neck.

"Nogue!?"

One of the heads of the three headed camel notices me.

The other two heads are alerted and look over and stand up with their eyes wide open. It then hurriedly starts trying to run in the opposite direction.

I kick the ground and fly in the air, using my wings I swing diagonally using [Kamaitachi].

The wind blades fly through the air and strike the necks of the three heads, making the body stop in its track. Right when I landed I used my claws to pierce into the three headed camels body to finish it off.

[28 experience points obtained] [Title Skill [Walking Egg: Lv-] activated 28 bonus points received]

“gurua?”

Since I moved quite a bit I wonder if they are still okay in the back?

“pefu”

「All safe」

“Ha, yeah! nya, umm, it was fun”

The ball rabbits use of [Telepathy] has considerably improved. Pretty soon it will be able to hold constant conversations. This way we may be able to live with other monsters and humans.

This is good since using [Human Transformation] is uncomfortable, especially since it consumes such a large amount of MP making me feel sluggish, so at least things are improving. Now I can at least have some confidence that communication won't be to troubling.

Well, at least I'm happy about it.

Also skill level for the ball rabbits [Telepathy] should rise, soon shouldn't we be able to hold a decent conversation or even gossip? If we come into contact with other humans we could also try to avoid an unnecessary fight.

Let's have the ball rabbit keep using [Telepathy] whenever its MP is full.

“pefu”

「meat, meat, meat!」

I got it I got it.

I'll let you eat more, since you're now my salaried translator.

I let Nina and the ball rabbit get down, then start my work dismantling the three headed camel.

The internal organs are scooped out using my claws and the fur is peeled off by cutting it into sections. I have grown used to this. The past me, in my former life would have fainted, probably.

I use a low power [Scorching Breath] to easily cook the meat and cut it up to serve, and so as not to get any sand on it, I lay the fur on the ground as a mat.

I also separated the hump and set it to the side.

I then cut some cactus and used the skin as a plate and set the fillings as a side dish to the meat. Hmm, it came out nicely. I'm confident that I can cook pretty well, only if I didn't have this looming anxiety that I might plague the food. Especially since the plating was done pretty well this time.

...It will soon be time to say goodbye to Nina. So I at least want to do something good for her.

I am still hoping there is something else I can do for her. At the very least I want to make some good memories.

Oh, that's right.

What if I were to cut this fur really thin? If I were to shape the bones into a sturdy stick then I may be able to make some decent fishing rods.

The sea is just right there as well.

The port city shouldn't be too far from here, and Nina's body still hasn't shown any sign of abnormalities. I guess it would be fine even if we were to stick around for a

little bit.

I cut the edge of the remaining fur as thin as possible. Although I failed several times, I managed to make something thin enough in the end. Alright, now to shape the camels bones...

“pefu.....”

The ball rabbit smacks my foot with its ears. Looking at its face, I could see its tongue slightly sticking out and drooling. I-I get it, you want to eat the rest of the camel.

It was a little surprising, although expected.

The ball rabbit was even silently eating its portion earlier. Was it being courteous for Nina...

When I first met the ball rabbit I had thought that it only cared about food, but it looks like it also cares about Nina.

You know, I also don't mind a conversation with [Telepathy].

...There is also the option of having the ball rabbit accompany Nina to the port city. If it's the ball rabbit then I don't really have to worry about it being attacked just because it's a monster. Although I'm not entirely certain, this may make Nina's treatment in the port city better.

The ball rabbit can also use [Telepathy], [Clean] and [Rest]. Those kinds of things are quite useful to humans so it might turn out well.

But if that happens... then I also will be traveling alone.

Well, that's fine I guess.

That way I can concentrate on gaining experience, leveling up and gaining titles for a better evolution.

...If that happens then I may be able to go back to that village in the forest and spend my time there.

“.....”

Did you read my mind ball rabbit? It was just staring at me. Stop, it was nothing, it's embarrassing if you read those kinds of thoughts.

I was wondering if the ball rabbit would get angry or decline, telling me why I'm deciding things on my own, but the ball rabbit just awkwardly turned its eyes from me.

What is it?

If you have something to say why don't you use [Telepathy] to tell me.

Chapter 149

Bone Fishing Rod

I restarted my work on making the fishing rod after having finished eating.

I tried cutting the fur thin enough to act as a string, and the pole is being made using the spine by cutting off the extra parts. I cut tiny holes on the tip of the pole and thread the fur string through there, making sure to tie it firmly. I then pull out a decent sized needle from the cactus and bend it a little so it forms a hook, then tie it to the fur string.

Hmm... even though it's a fishing rod it does look a little weird. How far can this thing be casted? Is there even a fish that will get caught with this?

"Umm, What did you make?"

Nina calls out.

Alright, ball rabbit, it's your turn!

Do your job as a translator!

I let you eat a good amount earlier so I won't hold back!

I know that it's sometimes hard to convey what the other is saying exactly but just this time I want you to say everything I'm thinking as clearly as possible.

I want it to come out as if I'm the one speaking.

"pe, pefu....."

The ball rabbit that was taking a nap after eating was shaken by my tail and woken up, A translation is requested.

Tell her that I made a fishing rod, even though it looks a little weird.

「... Fishing rod, made look」

The translation came out rather hard to discern in meaning...

Isn't there a better way? I know that it can't be helped, but I want more feeling put into it.

"Fishing rod?"

Nina sees the fishing rod that I made and tilts her head. I know that the fishing rod doesn't look anything close to what a fishing rod should look like, but with the hook hanging on a string like that it shouldn't be too hard to figure it out. Apparently, Nina didn't know what a fishing rod was in the first place.

Is there a chance that fishing rods don't exist in this world? That's strange, isn't it something essential? Even 40,000 years ago in my world a fishing hook was found in some ruins. Even without all the perfect conditions, someone should have come across the idea to hang the fish on some kind of hook.

There is also a chance that Nina just didn't know of it. There are cases like that depending on the environment and culture you live in.

"gua"

The hook at the end of the line is dipped into the sea not too far off shore, you take it out if a fish gets caught. From the world I'm from fishing has been an enjoyable past time, excluding those whose profession was fishing of course. If Nina at least tries it I think it might turn out pretty well.

"pefu..."

「come on already, make short」

A-Ah, sorry.

I got a little too excited.

「Hang hook. Pull up fish. Fun. Give a try」

The way that was summarized is a little...

Man, I wish I could communicate instead. Somehow I feel that I'm coming off as cold.

That was like a doctor telling a patient how to digest, I want it to be a little more heartfelt.

“That tool, you want me to use it?”

After hearing the explanation, Nina asked me while staring at the fishing rod with sparkling eyes.

Oh, did it catch your interest? Looking at Nina’s status I guess this may be natural for her, so it may be something she is quite fond of.

By all means, go ahead.

I won’t use it myself, so you could take it with you to the port city. You may get a chance to use it some time.

Which reminds me, I could maybe use it for planting, with [Status Check] I could figure what else it could be used for. I should do it really quick.

[[Bone Fishing Rod: Value: F+]] [It is the only one of its kind using the same material, the thread is thick and so is the hook] [It will be difficult to reel in food even if the hook were to pierce]

That’s a painful evaluation...

We-Well, I guess it’s the thought that counts. Actually, it was made using gathered materials from scraps, so I think it’s lucky that it was even evaluated as being a fishing rod. I can make as many as I want as long as I have more camels.

Ill knead together whatever is left of the camel and make some pieces of meat dumplings to use as bait.

...I wonder if this kind of fishing will work. I have been making things out of my ideas, but I’m worried about this one. Does the sea of this world have normal fish? Or have all the normal fish been over fished?

Nina also imitates me and happily starts making meat dumplings. I can’t let the anxiety show now. Should I ask after staring at the ocean for a while? If we aren’t able to catch anything, what should I do to compensate?

The ball rabbit also kneads the surplus meat with its ears into meat dumplings and flicks it into its mouth. Can't you at least just help a little. Are you still lacking enough food after eating all of that camel's meat? It looked like you consumed over a few hundred kilos worth, are you collecting calories?

It's probably the strangest thing I've encountered since entering this world.

I wrap the bait with fur and hand it to Nina along with the fishing rod. Nina caresses the fishing rod and looks to the sea.

"Please leave it to Nina! I will gather a good amount for tonight's meal nya! Even if it's a little bit, I will definitely get something!"

Okay

I'm happy you are excited about it, but you don't have to force yourself...

Rather, in the case when you're not able to catch anything, I'm sorry, I will help you out somehow...

I will need to ask the ball rabbit for help using [Telepathy] if Nina ends up in a bad mood. Just as an insurance if we aren't able to catch anything.

"pefu"

「yeah, expected crisis. If tonight comes without any catch, you bastard will have to go do something about it yourself, ok~」

"Funya!?"

Ball rabbit! What's with you!

Far from acting as insurance, you go and say that.

Nina's trembling a little!

You didn't have to be so malicious about it!

"If you are fine with Ni-Nina then..."

Fix this!

Ball rabbit, please fix it!

This girl is making weird decisions!

Nina realizes after I started panicking that it was just the ball rabbits joke and starts laughing while patting her chest.

In order to get started on fishing, we return to the beach. Nina was restlessly excited, and was observing the sea with a blushing face.

Guessing from the ears, she's a cat beast person, and may really like fish. No, not all cats liked fish. I heard that if it had to choose between canned beef food or canned fish food, it would choose the former, ah my memories are a little disappointing. Seeing that my companion was a drunk it couldn't be helped.

Fish, the fish of the sea... I can't see any.

Is there really something to catch?

I will feel guilty if we weren't able to catch anything. Even boots or an empty can could make a nice story, but it doesn't look like much people travel around here in the first place...

Chapter 150

Fishing

After moving to the beach.

Nina fixes the meat dumpling to the fish hook.

“...As I thought, the hook is easy to see.”

“gurua”

I lightly growl and point out to Nina the fur that was used to wrap the meat dumplings.

“Nya~ ...? You want me to put another one?”

“guu”

When I heard Nina’s answer I deeply nodded my head.

Finally, a conversation was able to happen even without the ball rabbits assistance. I had thought that it was only a dream which could be realized further down the road, but looks like in these conditions it is able to form naturally.

“I feel that it’s a waste nya...”

“guou”

All of the bait was made for this purpose in the first place. You could hide the hook if you put two pieces. I didn’t think most of them would be used in the first place, and if you’re talking about waste then the ball rabbit has already wasted plenty enough already, so there’s no problem.

However, I don’t know whether there are any fish that can swallow this amount... well, if needed we can just adjust the amount later. There won’t be any fish that will jump at the hook if it’s left in view.

Nina conceals the hook by covering it up in bait.

“This... will this really be okay?”

The huge bait is completed, and Nina looks back at me with unease. I tried to cheer by showing a good sign.

She swings the rod back and up towards the sea. The bulky bait drew a beautiful parabola as it danced in the air before landing in the sea. It looked pretty good considering it was the first time.

I can't see any shadows of fish around, are there really any fish here?

Oh, there is some. It's really sparse though. They will come here sooner or later as long as there's bait right...?

Quite a bit of time has passed, but there still hasn't been anything. Nina looks about ready to cry. The ball rabbit narrows its eyes and looks around the sea, before staring at me as if wanting to tell me something.

Aw man, although patience is necessary for fishing... but after several dozen minutes... we won't catch anything at this rate. I wonder if diving in the sea would be better.

“gurua”

“Nya! Mr. Dragon... sorry, I was concentrating”

Nina's shoulders shiver a little. Well it will be scary if I suddenly call out. There could be a chance that she would die of fright the next time. Although, I do often see a fish's shadow, it doesn't seem to fall for the bait with my shadow casting over the surface.

“guuo”

You can get on my back and go a little further.

“pefu”

「Sea inside, go. Get on～」

The ball rabbit does a simultaneous translation. I should also pick up [Telepathy].

Then I would be able to talk with monsters and even humans.

“Mr. Dragon, can you swim?”

“guuu...”

Maybe... it should be fine.

Just be ready to save yourself in case you go overboard.

“pefu!”

「An expert, it's like boarding a large ship just leave it to me～」

You... you're able to say anything fluently with [Telepathy].

Why do you not do it more often then? I don't really mind, but if you become fluent and confident in something useless, I will be worried that Nina might see you and me as something different. I do occasionally notice you talk, but you don't say anything strange right?

“.....”

I feel uneasy when you're silent! what is it?

I beg.

I don't want to separate just yet, but I would like to at least say goodbye with all my feelings.

I place the ball rabbit and Nina on my back and head into the ocean. Since my feet can't reach the bottom, I just have to let my body float and move forward and paddle with my wings.

It is actually pretty fun. I may be able to float like this while sleeping, and maybe I can reach another island somewhere if I really tried. Though with Nina here... she will die of illness on this kind of cruise, yeah. This is more of a plague ship.

“Mr. Dragon! There are plenty of fish over that way! Please head that way and leave it to Nina!”

Nina says so with vigor.

I turned my head and looked back at her. Her eyes are full of enthusiasm and focus, directed towards the sea, this is certainly a hunter kind of thing.

From watching you the whole time you've always been scared or nervous up till now, but this must be how you really are. You shut yourself in after traveling with a dragon, when you were made into a slave and presented as bait for a centipede, experiencing extreme situations after the other.

No, the last event to happen was actually me.

I didn't really need to follow Nina's directions as I could clearly see darker shadows over that way. I can probably catch the fish more efficiently if I swing around my claws in the sea, but i won't do something so foolish.

I swing my wings and gently row towards the large schools of fish.

Nina puts more bait on the hook. After a while floating in the sea the bait has naturally fallen off so it was necessary to reapply it.

As I approached the fish, their appearance began to clear. I saw a flat fish with light blue and black stripes. It closely resembled a striped beakfish. Did the pattern of the fish fade as it grew? I don't really remember many of the details, and I don't even know if that type of fish exists in this world in the first place.

It looks delicious, if possible I would like you to catch it. I can't remember much but I feel that striped beakfish sashimi of was my favorite in my previous life. The texture is solid and yet full of fat.

Should I tell Nina to go for that fish? It would be nice to get something good out of this and having a goal would be nice for Nina. I need to see if the ball rabbit has any MP left to translate.

Lets see.

Race: Peach Ball Rabbit
State: Normal
Lv: 10/30

HP: 54/54

MP: 26/45

It's quite low... I guess it did use [Telepathy] a lot today. I don't know how much longer we can stay together, but it's tough relying on the ball rabbits MP. Should I devote my time to raising the ball rabbits level?

No, not right now.

We might reach the port city by tomorrow.

Even with Nina, I don't know when symptoms of sickness will start to appear. To be honest, it's strange that no initial symptoms have appeared yet. With the ball rabbit it could have been because of its small size and because [Plague Breath] was used before. I don't quite understand what's going on, but is there something else that should be considered which doesn't show up in the status?

Maybe it does not develop for a long time... I should consider this later.

Anyway, for now let's enjoy ourselves.

Let's make memories as its all I can do for Nina since I can't enter the city.

"guuo..."

I stopped growling half way through.

The light blue and white striped fish at the edge of my sight was torn in two in an instant.

"giche, giche!"

A fish splashed out of the water just under the fish that was torn in two. The size is about the same as a fat snapper, but its appearance was a little spooky. A brilliant green body, eyes popping out with white blood vessels. Fangs that grew in such a way you wouldn't think they were a feature of a fish. In its mouth, the entrails of the fish it just tore into.

Really, I already want to return to land.

Chapter 151

Big Catch

Was that really a fish? It looked more like a frog that was run over by a car trying get across the road.

I scan the sea to search for that grotesque fish. Looks like that fish cut open the belly of that stripped fish, since I could see the upper and lower body sinking while leaving behind a blood trail. Pieces of its organs were floating about as the blood spread around the two pieces.

“Pefu! Pefu!”

「Ouch, it was cut open!」

I saw it! You didn’t have to use [Telepathy]. Also don’t try anything for your own good. Don’t try to eat it, and if you move around like that Nina will get hurt.

Although when I think about it, it doesn’t really swim around where there are any humans so I don’t really mind them being here. Since, I have my scales it won’t be able to break through them easily, but as for the ball rabbit, it will be a slaughter.

“He-Here, I’ll catch you here you fish! Please watch Mr. Dragon!”

Nina furiously swings the fishing rod and casts the line and bait quite far. Is it alright if I don’t stop this? Well, it doesn’t look like there’s many of them... it should be okay. It will be painful telling her to retreat now.

“The fish is coming for the bait, please look! Watch this please!”

I zoned out while watching her ears move around with a “pyokopyoko” matching the sea. I wonder how it moves like that. It’s actually enjoyable watching.

Oh, that’s right, that stripped fish, its body was torn in half. It didn’t come to eat but to kill. That fish definitely had murderous intent. Actually, I guess some internal organs were in its teeth. Maybe it only eats the organs it likes... oh, the bait is composed of

internal organs.

“Nyaa! Mr. Dragon, it looks like it was hooked! It’s pretty heavy! What should I do!”

“Guruwaa!”

Pull the pole now! Or it will be too late!

Before the ball rabbit could translate, Nina who was surprised by my voice pulled the rod with the momentum. A hideous green fish with white bloodshot eyes danced in the air while opening its mouth wide.

“gicheeee!”

The cactus hook is piercing through under its eye. If it would have been a little more to the side it would have been able to get out, but instead it was firmly hooked.

The rare fish glares at Nina with its vile white eyes. He was chomping his teeth apparently preparing to kill Nina.

“I caught the fish! I caught the fish!”

“guruwaaaa!”

I lift my upper body making Nina and the ball rabbit let out a short scream as they cling to my back.

I swing my claws to pierce the gills of the oncoming fish.

“gijigii!”

After it lets out a short scream while slightly chomping its teeth, it stopped moving.

[Due to difference in rank, experience points could not be obtained]

O, Yea.

So it’s treated as a monster after all.

I quickly returned to my original position and grabbed the cloth used to wrap the bait

with my free hand. I then twist the fish's body to wring it out and place it in the cloth before returning it back to Nina.

"Umm... this, what....."

Nina doesn't seem to understand what I just did with the fish, as she's tilting her head in confusion. This girl, I wonder if she never even noticed that the fish was coming after her, I haven't recognized it since everything until now has been fine, but she might be a natural airhead...

Well, let's have fun fishing without thinking too much into it. Fortunately there doesn't seem to be any more grotesque fishes around.

"guou"

I forgot to say it, but you should kill a fish you just caught immediately. There's a space around the gill area where there is a heavy flow of blood vessels, so if you either constrict or cut there, it will be an instant death. Nina should be able to this with her nails. If you bring a fish to land alive it will be painful for it, that's when the fish will start to feel stress and it then becomes hard and tasteless. After hanging it upside down a bit wash it off with seawater, oh was it too long? Ball rabbit were you able to get all that?

"pefu"

「When catch fish, immediately kill. Around gills vital point, cut there is death. If not it becomes unappetizing. Turn upside down to drain blood, then wash with sea water」

"Ha-Hai!"

That summary was brief...

It was narrowed down to only the essential points. Once again the ball rabbits obsession with food is amazing.

Nina removes the hook from the fish and dangles it upside down to drain the blood, then moves over to the edge of my back to wash it out with seawater. Hmm, I wonder if we can even eat that weird fish. Should I check if it's poisonous? There could be a swarm of them if I leave it here.

[[Eagle Bass]: Rank E monster] [A fish known for its bulging white eyeballs and strong fangs. Its favorite food is intestines] [Due to the fact that it can be used as material for magical tools, it has been over fished, and extinction is a concern] [Also, it has a habit of being lured by strong magical power, so it is easy to search for if the correct conditions can be prepared]

I wouldn't bother searching for this fish...

It's good that they are going extinct. Let them be destroyed to the last. I thank those who went out of their way to prepare what they needed to hunt these things.

Well if they are scarce then it's fine. Its unlikely to appear again. Looking around the area I can't find any more like it so I can finally concentrate on fishing.

Nina faces the fishing rod towards the ocean again. I hope you can catch something good this time. If possible I'd like you to catch the same type of fish that the other killed earlier.

After an hour we started fishing again, various bleeding fish were lined up on my back. The intestine eating gouging bash, The decently sized peacock fish with brilliant scales, a violent two headed eel... are they trying to show how much variety they have around here? All the fish I've seen so far have been some kind of nonsensical deviation from the ones in my original world.

Counting all the fish we've caught totals close to thirty. It was a good result, but I can't help feeling that something about this was different.

"Amazing, ball-chan is amazing! It went for it again!"

"pefu!"

「Tell them to gather. Then get them as they stay!」

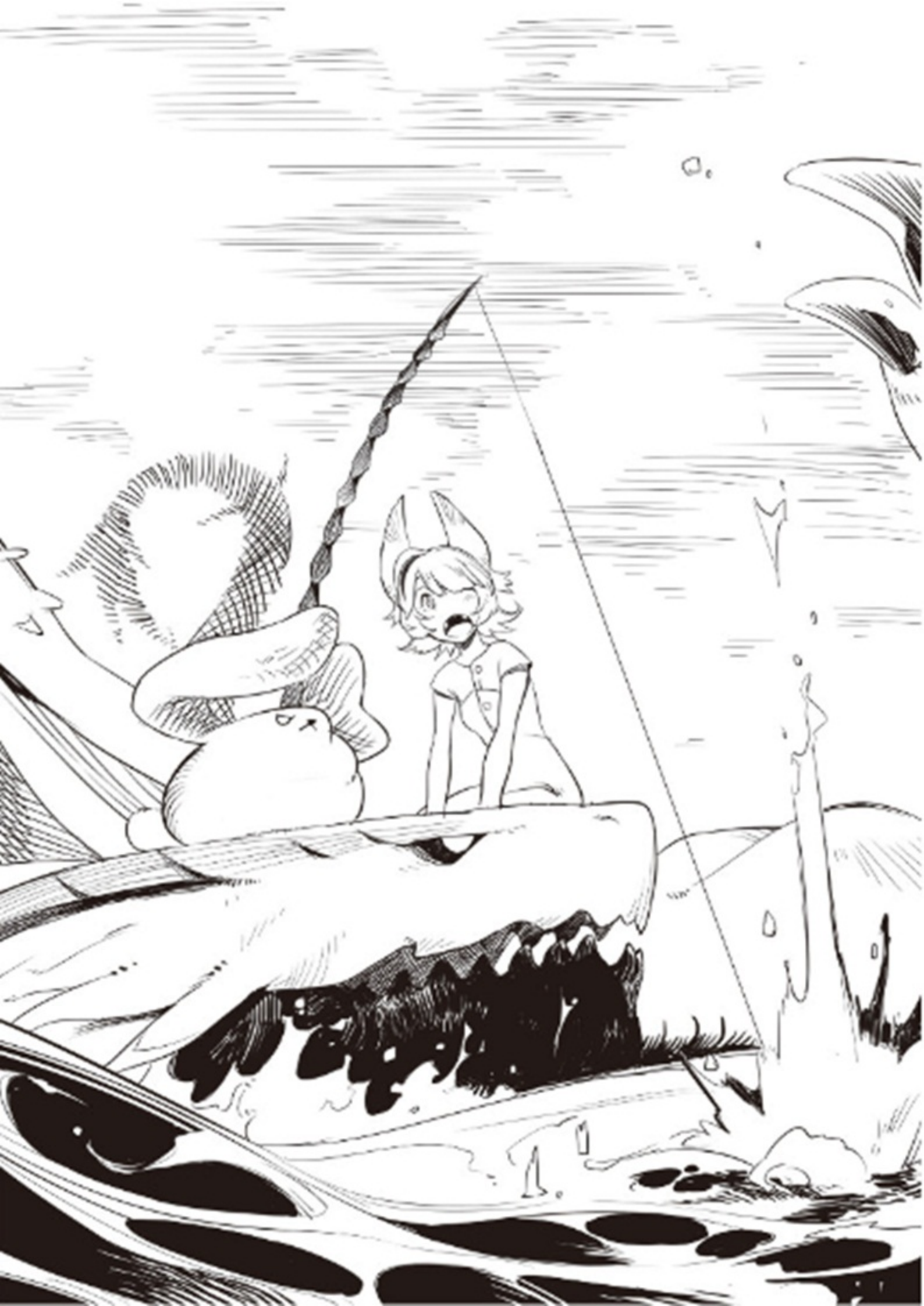
"gomen..."

...so all the fish were lured to the lure by the ball rabbit to make it easier to catch. With the exception of that first fish, the eagle bass, the rest she has gotten was nothing but small empty bottles.

Nina may be a little clumsy, but aren't you too impatient? All the bait has been taken

by the fish. Sometimes the fish hook failed to stick as it is poorly shaped and the fish escaped.

Every time she failed, Nina would lower her ears, and she would put bait on the hook half-crying. Even I felt sorry from looking at the scene.



When I thought that Nina finally caught something, it was another small bottle. Nina was sitting there as if she just had her heart broken. That's when the ball rabbit went and swung the fishing rod to try it out, you idiot, the ball rabbit ended up catching another fish. Nina received the fish from the ball rabbit and went to work on draining the blood and washing it like a clerk.

Hmm... why did we start fishing again?

"Awesome, this is the biggest one today!"

"pefu! pefu!"

We-well, as long as they are having fun, right, yeah.

Chapter 152

Meal

Since enough fish were caught, I start floating towards land. This is going to take a while, since I'll be saying farewell to Nina, I might seriously just try crossing the ocean.

I would like to see how Nina will fare after leaving her in the port city if possible, preferably before I leave the desert. But I wonder if I'll even have the opportunity. There will be quite the commotion if I were to go near the city. Then the city will become a ghost town instead.

I was able to send off the eight soldiers before without harming them too much, seeing as I could be regarded as a considerable threat to humans, I say I did rather well. I didn't think they were particularly weak, after all, I'm sure they will be missed if I were to kill them. Maybe if I keep one-sidedly beating them they'll leave me alone.

After arriving at the beach, I let Nina and the ball rabbit get off. Nina and the ball rabbit then layout some of the camels fur and place the fish on there.

In the meantime I dig a hole in the beach and scoop out some seawater by cupping it in my hands and carry it to the hole. Then I make the water evaporate by heating it up with my breath until only salt was left.

Salt will be useful in the future. Now to wrap the salt up in some fur to make it easier to carry. Collecting salt is difficult if I stray to far from the sea.

The quality of food varies depending on the presence or absence of salt. Actually, I also like Piperis. I guess it's not something that could be found in the desert. It would be nice to have something similar... I wonder if it could only be found in that forest. Well it can't be helped if I think about it.

I grill the fish with [Scorching Breath] and coat them with the salt I made earlier. It's my first time grilling fish in this life when I think about it. I feel like I can eat it raw, but this time I decided to heat it up.

As there may be strange parasites, I'll make sure it's safe. Myself and the ball rabbit

will be fine, but Nina still has a human stomach. It will be rude to eat something prepared different.

I lift the fish by the tail and finish it in one bite. Mmm, its delicious. Its nostalgic as the taste has not changed much from the fish in my previous life.

Lets give the grotesque fish and whatever's left of the intestines and bait to the ball rabbit. Only that guy will dare to eat such things around here. That weird fish was named Eagle Bass. I use to shy away from eating the dark worm before, but now, I'm proud to say that I still find it gross.

There's a chance that even the ball rabbit won't like it. Since the eyeballs looked like they are about to jump out, yeah, you will be cursed if you eat the eyes.

Oh, yeah when I checked its status before with [Status Check], it had said that it was used as a material for magic tools or something. I could burn it now and be done with it, or keep it as there may be a time when I will need it for something.

"This fish, although it doesn't look very appealing, it is pretty tasty."

When I looked over to Nina, she was eating the Eagle Bass. I looked over to Nina and the fish three times on reflex. Are your senses strange? Maybe since you caught it yourself are you trying to take responsibility? You don't have to force yourself.

"Since there is only one of these... Mr. Dragon do you want half? I've finished my half of my contribution! This is your half!"

...Don't force yourself.

It seems that some memory corrections were taking place to change the taste. By the way, excluding this fish, the rest of what Nina managed to catch happens to be nothing but bottles... You can't chew on a bottle so I can't blame her for her eagerness on such a gross fish.

I thought of refusing and using the excuse that she went through the trouble just to catch it, especially since the head was the half presented to me. I closely look at the white eyeballs of the eagle bass.

"guoo..."

Can't I just take the eyes? I feel that there will be aftereffects if I were to eat the rest.
Do you hate me?

“pefu”

「Bring it to your mouth, or I will stuff it in there」

Wait wait! Hey you!

I feel like the ball rabbit has been treating me bad today. What did I do to spoil your mood? Actually wait, I don't want to know what you're thinking, I'm scared just thinking about it.

“Now please eat nya! Come on, please have at it!”

Nina brings the eagle bass closer to my face. Hey, hey! Just keep it, even the eyeballs! Our eyes met! It's staring at me! Even though it shouldn't be able to, it's staring at me! Ball rabbit please tell her! Have her stop!

“Is it unpleasant...? I-I'm sorry nya...”

Nina hunches over and looks down, while looking at me with an upward glance. Her ears lie flat without strength.

“...guu”

I gave up and decided to open my mouth. Nina's face shines and with a “pa” she sticks the fish head into my mouth.

I closed my mouth and eyes trying not to think about it. As I was chewing a gentle sweetness spread throughout my mouth. Although it's hard to imagine based on its appearance, the taste closely resembles that of a crab. It has a gelatin like texture and its soft and chewy.

It's actually not bad.

Luckily its taste does not match its gross appearance. While continuing to chew, two spheres flew into my mouth. Right, aren't those the eyeballs? So they finally showed up.

I was strongly thinking of vomiting, but I decided to just ignore the thought instead. With all my spirit, I decided to finally swallow.

“How was it Mr. Dragon?”

“guuu...”

Honestly, it was delicious.

It was delicious, but I feel uneasy about it... no, let's not think about it too much.

Chapter 153

Tale of a Certain Brave Man 4 (side story)

I went to the basilica early this morning.

After a casual talk with the priest I asked for permission to have Adofu released. Even though I know exactly what I want and what I should do, its troublesome when I have to go through so many formal procedures. No matter how idiotic however, it is something I must do in order to be regarded as part of the upper layers.

There are many knights, but all of that is due to the upper echelons enlisting men with the incentive to provide for their families. All only to waste them gathering resources to keep up their extravagant lifestyles. Adofu, who was dissatisfied with the present situation is now a prisoner who will not change his mind on the matter. I didn't realize how much more easily I could move when a crisis actually approaches.

Even though this country was made because I put all on the line, to think those hyenas grew fat off my leftovers. Those parasitic bastards. This is truly a garbage country. Just how many times have I thought about releasing monsters within the walls? It will be a refreshing scene for sure. The cry of the knights mothers crying for their children to escape while the knights are being exposed for their stupidity. It wouldn't be bad for my image if I was to show up halfway through and win. They should be crushed by that time though.

After all, there will be no way to figure out that I was the criminal, especially if it was a monster that goes unidentified. I guess it's only common sense that if you use monsters to kill the echelons of the church, then the church can't go against you.

But... for now i'm moving about early in the morning. To hide under the cover of dawn and leave Harenae before the sun climbs with the task to have Adofu handle the evil plague dragon. For the time being, the matter was announced to the people by the church, but it seems that the response wasn't as great as expected. Originally the departure was to be setup to show off to the citizens, but this time we are operating without that to avoid any unnecessary troubles, and then later report the results in a grand manner.

Everyone is dissatisfied with the thought of having Adofu, who is suspected of murder, going free. The reason why the criticism of this case exceeds the church's expectation is because I have prevailed in spreading disadvantageous rumors about Adofu to the country. When I think of how the priest who receives this report will hold their head in worry satisfies me. Although it's not fun to have so many restrictions on how I behave, this amount is still acceptable.

I used former bums who owed me a favor for showing a little kindness, to spread the rumors about here and there, since there's no need to worry since they can't even be tracked and easily disposed. They weren't promised any position or money, but since they're idiots it was only necessary to use legal terms for them to cooperate. When it seems that they are becoming inconvenient or showing signs of betrayal, it is advantageous to be able to easily dispose of them with little preparation. Even if I kill such a man, no one will complain or even try to find the culprit.

Adofu is taken out of the prison and two people, dressed in cloaks, walk around the city hiding their faces.

"...truly, I am sorry, Irushia. I heard that even for you, this time was considerably difficult to recommend something." (Adofu)

I hear Adofu seriously saying this, and it becomes difficult to hold in my laughter. The thought itself is foolish, but nothing can be done about someone who is foolish.

"No, me doing this is natural. If you still want to thank me, then do so after the false incident has been resolved and your fiancée's and younger brother's enemy gets taken away. There are those who doubt there was such a person so early in the morning, but it is better to be thorough..." (Irushia)

I pretend to pay attention to the surroundings as I divert my face from Adofu to hide my smiling face.

I began to feel the presence of people as we approached a residential district. Adofu also seems to have noticed, as he knits his face and stops his feet.

"Should we change our course?" (Adofu)

"...it looks like every direction is similar. Seems someone in the church has leaked out info to harass us this morning. Especially since there's no monolith at our destination." (Irushia)

I couldn't hold it in, I covered my face with the palm of my hand. Although its shameless, it couldn't be helped. It's better than showing my smiling face after all.

Of course, it was me who leaked out, the time, date, circumstances and route. Although there was also the harassment of Adofu and priests, the main purpose was to clarify my position on the matter as seen by the general public.

Three young men ran up and pointed at Adofu as they cried out in a loud voice.

"Oh, look it's the family killer Adofu!" (young man 1)

"Even if you tried to escape, in front of the brave hero, it can't be done!" (young man 2)

As soon as the men's voices are heard, a crowd begins to form. It was likely that they prepared to meet us beforehand. People who were sleeping also heard the commotion and went out their houses. After noticing it, Adofu is frozen in embarrassment while being surrounded.

"Obediently receive your death sentence!"

Someone throws a stone.

Adofu saw it, but it seems he intends to stand his ground as he doesn't try to avoid it. Wouldn't the crowd just find this convenient? Well, it's only around this neighborhood after all. I should control this situation before it gets out of hand.

I step forward and holding my sword, I parry the stone with my sheath.

"...It seems extreme rumors have spread around, so I will try to clear some up here and now. Don't worry about the church, since I am here I will excuse you from them for the time being." (Irushia)

I speak to Adofu in a low voice and turn forward as I go along.

"I am sure you are all questioning why I chose the former Knight Chief as my companion, it was because I decided that he was a qualified person in view of the circumstances. Although he was only the Knight Chief for a short term, he was also my master at one point. Some personal feelings may have been involved in the decision but let it be known that I do not plan on being enticed by anyone. I also believe that

the killing done by the Knight Chief was a false charge. In return for Knight Adofu's assistance in the subjugation mission, only a simple reexamination of the case was requested. I assure you that there is nothing more to it than that, I stake it in my name as a brave man. If there is any trouble with Adofu during the course of this release period, I will take full responsibility for it. So please... please let us through." (Irushia)

I quietly bow my head.

An awkward air floats about the vicinity, and a path slowly opens one person at a time.

"Shall we go? Before we are again surrounded" (Irushia)

I say with a low voice, and lead Adofu through the opened path as Adofu is still in confusion.

".....truly, I am really sorry!" (Adofu)

After getting out the highly crowded road, Adofu bites his lips to the point drops of blood begin spilling. While jeering at such an Adofu in my mind I rush ahead.

My position has been solidified with this.

Although I did deny Adofu's wrongdoings, with this everyone would think that I was only "Dealing with Adofu's deceit".

Oh, and it goes without saying that I was never intending to take responsibility in the first place. The church that is attached with fear will defend the me, who is the symbol of this country. Nobody will purposely make a ruckus to the public lest they are ready to suffer the consequences. In the first place, as long as the church has given permission, whatever happens, it was all part of the plan. More than anything, under the law of Harenae, punishment for criminals who have escaped falls on close relatives. Besides, I still need to make an example out of him since I'm currently filled with the sweet sparks of emotion lingering about.

Though I might receive voices of criticism, it will only take effect if my virtue suddenly gets flipped. Unless that happens I don't need to worry. Since Mr. skillful, was passed as my original idealism, my motto as a brave man, let's be content for the time being.

Chapter 154

If Today is the Last

“Guuooo”

While I’m loudly yawning, the ball rabbit appears out of the sand.

“pefu...”

After sleepily rubbing its eyes with its ears the ball rabbit then covers its mouth for a yawn.

Those ears are really dexterous. By chance is that not an ear but an arm? It could even wield a sword if it wanted to.

The time for sleeping is over.

I still have to walk over to the port city.

Although Nina has been saying that the port city was pretty close, I have yet to see it in the distance...

Since I don’t want to run out of time, I want to at least confirm the distance to it. I wonder if I should just fly over and see if I could spot it.

By the way, Nina is currently inside the ball rabbit’s mouth.

We came to a conclusion that this was the safest way to sleep.

It would be a real tragedy were I to accidentally swallow while sleeping. Also, I’m unclean. It doesn’t bother me one bit, yeah. No, really.

Thanks to the ball rabbits skill [Internal Storage], the saliva doesn’t get in the way, even if you place Nina inside. There way be a little drool, but it’s not much.

Apparently there is another dimension inside the ball rabbit’s stomach that acts more

like a warehouse. The ball rabbit said itself that there doesn't seem to be anything in there. By the way, Nina had said that it was "warm and relaxing." The ball rabbit is seriously capable. You are better suited for humans than in deserts full of monsters, I'm jealous.

"pepu"

Nina appears from the ball rabbit's mouth.

The ball rabbit grabs Nina with its ears and gently places her on the desert floor.

Nina bathes in the light for a bit and slowly wakes up. Being half asleep as she gets up the ball rabbit supports her with its ears.

"Oh, thanks ball-chan"

Nina caresses the ball rabbits head. These two became really good friends. But its different when it comes to another person.

"guru"

Nina, where is the port city? How long do we have until we get there?

"....."

There isn't a reply. Why, whats wrong?

"pefu..."

The ball rabbit closes its eyes after spitting out a big sigh. Since she didn't answer was it still trying to translate for me? It always translates my thoughts, so maybe I have grown accustomed to the ball rabbit doing it all the time.

Hey, ball rabbit, translate it for me. Are you still sleepy?

"pefuu"

「stomach ache, still sleepy」

It had eaten more than usual yesterday... it may be good to reduce its intake from now

on. If it continues to eat as much as it wants like it is now, I feel that it would become completely useless in the wild on its own.

“pefu! pefu!”

「wake up! wake up! translation starting!」

Ooh!...

It doesn't want its meal reduced.

“pefu”

「city, how far to get there」

“...If we leave early, I think we should be able to see it by today. Going by memory, that large skull over there means we are quite close.”

Looking at the place Nina is pointing too, there is something like a dinosaur skull buried there. Perhaps it is that of a dragon. I can't imagine dinosaurs walking along this desert.

Its size is about equal to mine.

I don't want to think that monsters of the same kind as that skull are wandering around in this desert. It's pretty old and it has almost assimilated with the sand, so I'm just going to think that there aren't any like this wandering around.

About all I could do against the huge centipede and the ants is run, so I ask that no more strange monsters come out.

Well then... by today is it?

Instead of walking, I could reach the port city right away if I were to use [Roll] at full power. Should things go sour, that's the least I could do for Nina. Also, [Spirit Relief] has become Lv7, so it should be easier to obtain white magic later.

I plan on practicing [Rest] in the near future. There is also the ball rabbit who could already use it. Should I have all of us, including Nina, practice? If recovery magic could be used, Nina's situation in the city may change. I don't know if I could master it in a

day, but I've managed to succeed even a little, when I was smaller.

It may be that weak magic is easier to remember, since it isn't really recognized as a skill. Although, it is useful in life as it can cure small wounds.

“gurua”

I should do something about it right away.

Ball rabbit, teach recovery magic, to me and Nina.

“pefu?”

「Nina as well?」

“gau”

Yeah, I think it would be convenient to remember recovery magic before Nina gets to the port town. It may make her treatment there a little better, and I also wish to learn it.

The ball rabbit reads my thoughts and turns to Nina.

“pefu”

「Before end, good to learn white magic」

“.....But.....”

Hmm, why does it feel like it didn't come across as well as I had hoped...

I thought it was a good idea. I guess it's not that easy to memorize such a thing.

If it was that easy to learn [Rest], then everyone would have acquired it. I don't have that much knowledge on the subject, so there might even be a difference in the way we learn.

It's apparent now, I'm limited in knowledge. I only mainly have knowledge pertaining to a different world, but I don't have much knowledge of this world. I may supplement it with [Status Check]... but ordinary people of this world won't have something like

[Status Check]. I did not see it in Milia or anyone else for that matter. With this development, I feel that the ability to learn skills is a lot better between me and the residents of this world.

Perhaps, I said something strange?

“Ni, Nina, but... umm...”

Her voice is blurred and it gets smaller. I can even see that she may start to cry. What? Does she maybe have a bad memory of recovery magic?

“pefu”

The ball rabbit mumbles as it matches its face to Nina’s.

Didn’t you use [Telepathy] to tell her? Or did it just not get through? Listening to the ball rabbits voice, Nina tightens her lips as if she just made a firm decision.

“I-I, I look forward to working with you!”

Nina quickly lowered her head to me.

What, I don’t really know what you’re expecting of me.

There may have been some kind of misunderstanding considering the flow of the conversation just now, I only wish for the both of us to learn [Rest] from the ball rabbit.

Chapter 155

Acquiring White Magic

A vulture is placed in front of me and Nina.

Both are barely 1 meter in length, and have ferocious looking nails. The eyes are big considering it's from a bird, and it makes it quite creepy when it squints. There is no danger however, as it has a serious injury and should not be able to move properly. Both wings are also bound by fur.

Both were caught a little while ago with [Kamaitachi]. I had thought that something strange was watching me from above so when I looked up, the ball rabbit signaled me to act and I let it rush without fail. Both had a wound near the base of the wing.

[[Harenae Condor] : Rank E monster] [Condor that is only found in the desert of Harenae] [Powerless but cunning, attention to its actions is required as it is known to rob baggage and fly away with it] [The eggs are laid all over and left on their own, once the children hatch they hunt as a couple]

The children from the same nest become a couple and hunt together like that...

What percentage of them could actually reach adulthood from such a breeding method in this desert?

They will perish one day.

So that's why their habitat will never spread beyond Harenae. Child abandonment would be a problem no matter what world you're in.

The bird is much smaller than me however, I also don't think it is well enough to take off with the ball rabbit beside me. Especially since its focus is mainly directed towards catching corpses. I've heard somewhere that the bald head on vultures is used to prevent the spread of fungus on its hair when it's eating. No wasn't that defunct with the thermoregulation theory? Hmm, I guess I really shouldn't care about these kinds of things anyway.

Anyway... the purpose of these birds in front of me and Nina is for the sake of practice on using [Rest]. The last time I had learned [Rest] for a brief amount of time was when I used it on Miria. I wonder if that was due to the decent image I had in my head of curing wounds. No matter how much I think of it though, I can't see myself learning anything by just praying 'rest rest' with nothing in front of me.

It was also decided that I would not injure myself... so in the end the captured vultures would be our practice partners. It's a bit cruel but it can't be helped.

I check the status of the vulture placed in front of me.

Race: Harenae Condor

State: Bloodshed

Lv: 8/15

HP: 5/24

MP: 12/16

Next, to check the one in front of Nina.

Race: Harenae Condor

State: Bloodshed

Lv: 7/15

HP: 5/22

MP: 8/14

They both only have 5 HP? That makes it easier then I guess.

“pefu”

「For treatment of light wounds, clear mind. Necessary to stay focused.」

Listening to the teacher Mr. ball rabbit, I adjust my focus back onto the vultures wound. It should be fine. I was able to do it once before, so if I remember the same feeling as back then, then I should be able to do it.

If I'm able to learn [Rest], then it may affect something in my next evolution. Seen as

recovery magic is not suitable for evil dragons.

I should avoid any paths that may lead to a jabberwock. When I saw the description a while back after looking over status explanations, it is pretty much a walking catastrophe. Just by walking around you'll build a mountain of corpses. I absolutely don't want such a thing. I'm B rank right now, so it wouldn't be strange if it popped out again. If by the time my evolution came and that was the only choice... let's just say i'll be in quite the funny situation. I need to work my best to collect good titles.

“guu”

I concentrate on remembering the feeling of using [Rest] and give a little shout. Although the vultures wound slightly shines, blood continued to flow. I checked the vultures status, and it actually went up to 6 HP now.

It only changed by one...

When I think about it, back when I was a baby dragon it only restored by 3 in an hour. Does this have anything to do with me being a dragon? Hah... I still have plenty of MP left.

Recalling as I did the first time, I once again used [Rest]. That time I was desperately trying to use [Rest] on Miria who was collapsed on my back in the forest.

I closed my eyes and pictured myself as a baby dragon again. After opening my eyes, I superimposed Miria on the condor.

“pihiyaa! pihihihiwahiyaa!”

With bulging eyes the vulture cries out while wiggling around in its bonds. As I thought, it's impossible to think that this crying angry bird is Miria. But by concentrating on the old days, I feel as if I grasped the feeling, even if only a little.

“guua”

I once again use [Rest].

Although the one in front of me is a crying vulture, if I deceive myself and think otherwise, marking it is a dying child.

Suddenly, light started to soak into the vultures body.

Blood stops flowing out of the vultures wound and is soon blocked off.

“...pihiya?”

The vulture stops struggling.

Oh, hey, are you dying on me?

Race: Harenae Condor

Stat/e: Normal

Lv: 8/15

HP: 16/24

MP: 12/16

Alright!

The bloodshed was cured... and its HP recovered by ten just like that.

[Normal Skill [Rest: Lv1] obtained]

It has been recognized as a skill.

It's my first magic skill.

I want to raise its level quickly somehow.

[Title Skill [Spirit Relief] raised from Lv 7 to 8]

Finally, I got it up to Lv 8.

[Spirit Relief] makes it easier to master [Rest], so I guess it's thanks to [Spirit Relief] being a high level that I managed to learn [Rest], and [Rest] makes it easier to level up [Spirit Relief].

It's quite the loop.

Perhaps with this a holy dragon route will popup. A good and strong evolution choice is sure to come out next time.

When I looked over to my side, Nina looked at me with a smile.

“For the time being, the hemorrhaging seems to have calmed down!”

The ball rabbit, who was guiding us at the side is also looking at me with a proud face. As I now have a magic teacher, polishing my skill will be fast.

Why don't I take a quick look at the vultures status.

Race: Harenae Condor

State: Bloodshed

Lv: 7/15

HP: 2/22

MP: 8/14

It's about to die!

The reason its blood flow has settled is because it's almost out of it. If you look carefully, the vultures complexion is getting worse. I could easily tell due to its lack of hair. Its opening and closing its beak and a gloomy cry is coming out. It is defiantly headed for death.

The ball rabbit is looking over the vultures in satisfaction.

I don't know what I should say.

I know it's useless for them to know, as they don't have the ability to check the status. Since I was already able to learn [Rest], it would be better to focus on Nina's teaching. Ill let the ball rabbit know the status of the vulture.

Chapter 156

Dragon Scales

“.....How is it nya~.....”

Nina asks me, seemingly out of breath. When I heard it I looked away from Nina and back to the vulture.

Race: Harenae Condor
State: Bloodshed (small)
Lv: 7/15
HP: 7/22
MP: 8/14

Oh, she was finally able to restore 4 HP with [Rest] on the vulture. Even Though it had been 1 or 2 just a short time ago, this is a great achievement. Most of the symptoms of bloodshed have also been alleviated. Although it may not be very useful during battle, it should at least be possible to cure minor injuries.

“Gua!”

“Pefu!”

「Progress made to lessen wound」

“I-I did it... Nina was able to learn magic...”

Nina falls flat down. The ball rabbit leaped forward and caught Nina. Seems she was tired since her MP was almost drained.

So it's up to here. Although it's only enough to cure minor injuries, there may be some use for it in port city. If we keep practicing from now on I'm sure it will grow.

I undid the bindings on the vultures and released them. I felt guilty letting it go like

this, but it wasn't meant to be a meal in the first place.

“pihya?”

“pihyaa?”

“pihya, pyahya!” “pi, pihyaa!”

The two vultures faced each other and cried out, seems like they came to the conclusion that they could escape and did so. The two flew into the sky and ran away while flapping their wings. The ball rabbit looked up at the birds a little regretfully.

“Hinya...”

Nina groans in pain as she is resting on the ball rabbit. When I heard it I had a bad feeling. I hope this is just because she exhausted her mana.

Nina weakly raises her arm and uses her palm to cover her mouth.

“keho, keho!”

A cough appeared.

This was still good. A cough should be the initial symptom of a disease. Like this the status abnormality won't appear as well. If it starts getting worse, I could use [Roll] to move quickly.

Or at least it was supposed to be... Nina's hands had red splashes on them.

Its blood.

Nina looks at the palm of her hand and slowly turns her face towards me.

“...sorry, this is...”

Before she could say it, her eyes closed. The weight of the symptoms is clearly different from that of the ball rabbits. In the early stages you won't get worse at the initial stage of coughing. But is it different depending on monster or humans?

I quickly check Nina's status.

[Nina Nifa]

Race: Felis Huma

State: curse (small)

Lv: 8/60

HP: 19/27

MP: 5/24

Looks like she already has an abnormal state. Why? Is it because she doesn't have much MP her curse resistance dropped? Or is it because the ball rabbits curse resistance was originally stronger?

Was it a mistake to think that the conditions would be the same for everyone? Damn... this was a blunder. Certainly there were some signs if I think about it. Sometimes she would unnecessarily say sorry, or I sometimes look to see her have a strange face. In the first place, the grace period is abnormally long. I had thought that [Dragon Scales] may have had little effect, or that Nina's tolerance was strong, I was thinking of how easy going we were, but that wasn't the case.

Nina had been hiding her initial symptoms all this time. She acted so as not to rouse suspicion of her worsening condition as much as possible, and probably muzzled her coughs. Maybe because she knew that I would take her to the city as soon as I saw her showing any signs of sickness. Nina was certainly not prepared to go to that city yet.

If it's like this, there is a little I'm having trouble understanding. I thought that [Dragon Scales] only took effect after a certain amount of days before it begins to take effect, so Nina shouldn't have had to hide before then. There's also the fact that the highly perceptive ball rabbit did not notice Nina was hiding her symptoms.

I turn my eyes to the ball rabbit. The ball rabbit awkwardly looked away.

Ball rabbit, you... told Nina about [Dragon Scales] before me. I knew that when you were using [Telepathy] without me telling you too was related to the progress of the disease symptoms.

「I am... sorry」

The ball rabbit shrinks in size, as if trying to hide.

What were you thinking!

If we don't make it in time Nina will die!

Well there's no use being angry right now. I guess it was like this since Nina had asked it too. Its out of line to place the blame on the ball rabbit. Since its already like this, I must use [Roll] and send Nina to the port city as soon as possible.

"Exist....."

Huh?

What is it ball rabbit, what was she trying to say?

「Port city... does not exist. To keep going farther and farther, a distant land was used. The city is in another direction..... 」

...what does this mean?

「Nina, planned to pass away... out here. It couldn't be helped no matter where she went. Although there was a limit, she liked being together, that's why... 」

Tell me that in the first place instead of lying!

"Guuoo!"

When I roared the ball rabbit shuddered and folded its ears down further.

You should have at least told me.....

...Even if I was told would I be able to do anything?

I don't know anything at all about Nina's circumstances and how she's lived. I don't know what it was like to be a slave in Harenae.

When I had said that I could only take Nina to a village, it must have been cruel in Nina's perspective. But I couldn't prepare any other options. If I were human I could have done something else, but I'm a dragon.

"Guuuu..."

Nina of course was going to say that the port city was closer as her symptoms worsened. It was obvious that I would panic and head to town as fast as I could. All the while she quietly, intended to die in the desert.

...I wonder if I will be able to make it back to Harenae if I keep rolling at full power. There may be hope as it is completely unknown just how long the symptoms have progressed after appearing as a status abnormality. Though, I am only relying on uncertainties.

I guess, it is about time to consult Laplace after all this time. I did not want to use it as much as possible since I was uncertain on its effective range of events or whether it could even be trusted. It does seem dangerous but... I suppose now's a good a time as ever.

I don't think that Nina wants to go to Harenae or any place with people in the first place however. I wonder what I should do.

Chapter 157

Nina

I grab a cactus and return to the beach.

I laid Nina down on the seashore to rest and make the ball rabbit stand guard.

The sand in the desert is hot and not suited for an ill person to lie on.

I have to keep her hydrated for now.

Just standing up takes strength away in the heat of the desert.

Without water, the condition will only deteriorate further.

The ball rabbit receives the cactus from me, squeezes it, skims the contents, and pours the liquid between Nina's lips skillfully.

The color in Nina's face seems to have worsened since I got the cactus.

But if that's the case, it's progressing too fast, so it may just be in my head.

There isn't any time to worry, but I'm not sure what to do now.

Would it be better to hope for a miracle and stumble upon a city or to head back to Harenae?

I understand that I need to act quickly, but I can't bring myself to choose.

Is it better to let her die quietly like she wanted? I shouldn't even consider this.

I shake my head dismissing the thought from my head.

I glared at the ball rabbit.

If I had gone to Harenae, Nina wouldn't be dying now.

Even though I knew that the ball rabbit was acting on Nina's feelings, I still couldn't stop these feelings.

The ball rabbit notices my look and looks up quietly.

"PEFUU....."

he ball rabbit lets out a sad cry.

[Telepathy] doesn't have to be used.

The ball rabbit probably heard Nina's story beforehand.

The ball rabbit is a monster, but it is quite wise.

It wouldn't let Nina die without a reason.

Was Nina's past so dreadful that she had lost all faith in others?

She must have known a kind person wherever she was before, and surely one exists in Harenae.

Wasn't it possible to have hoped for that?

Nina's eyelid opens weakly.

She lifts her neck and moves her eyes a little.

They stop on my form and she moves her stiffened lips to speak.

"Nina's sorry Nya... Mr. Dragon"

She says in a low murmur.

"Nina has never known such kindness till now... So if possible... if even a little... she would like to stay with Mr.Dragon as long as possible... It is Nina's own selfishness. It was Nina who wanted to stay... so please, don't blame ball rabbit."

Nina closes her lips and coughs again.

After the cough stops she speaks again.

“Nina’s sorry... she’s betrayed the trust of Mr. Dragon... but please don’t think it was a waste.”

I hear you and I understand.

The ball rabbit probably wondered, if I knew Nina was going to die, would I even help her at all.

[Telepathy] Is a skill that allows one to communicate your thoughts to others and to read strong ones.

Sometimes, thoughts can slip out and be picked up by the ball rabbit unintentionally.

And surely, the ball rabbit had told Nina about this one.

And so they decided to keep it from me.

“Traveling with Mr.Dragon... Nina got to ride on him and see the scenery... she was taught fishing... at first, Nina was a little scared... but Mr.Dragon was always taking care of her even though they had just met... Nina realized he was just a gentle person... Nina wondered why he would do this and wondered why he would teach her these things, then she realized it was for her benefit... She felt bad for this... but more than that, Nina felt happy”

I found tears rolling down my face.

I was happy she felt this way, even though she was put in this situation.

It was the first time since I had become a dragon that I could think this.

“To separate like this... Nina is sorry nya. She wants to truly thank you, she’s been able to smile since she met you... even now she wants to smile as she says goodbye”

.....What should I do?

When I check Nina’s status again, I confirm that [curse (small)] has changed into [curse].

Once it reflects in the status, then the onset will only get worse.

I had tried to put some distance between us when I was searching for a cactus earlier but, it seems it wasn't enough.

I think soon, it would be better for me to leave.

Isn't it quite painful to die of a disease?

To be left in the desert to die while being surrounded by monsters.

Rather than suffering, with my claw...

"GWOOOOO....."

I look at the ball rabbit and growl in a low voice. I want the ball rabbit to ask Nina what I should do.

Nina began to talk simultaneously with the ball rabbit who had turned to face Nina.

[Telepathy] wasn't used, but somehow it understood what I had wanted to say.

"there are many things Nina wanted to say while she was still healthy... but, would Mr.Dragon stay with Nina till the end?"

All I could do was nod slowly.

I gently stroked Nina's back with my tail.

"Thank you very much, Mr..... dragon"

Nina says so and laughs weakly.

I, Nina and the ball rabbit.

Alone, with the two, we only gazed at each other.

Although Nina was in pain, her eyes weren't completely shut.

I don't know what to talk about, isn't there anything I could do? Such thoughts raced

through my head, but I couldn't come up with anything.

Suddenly some signs appeared from afar.

[Presence Sense] is strongly responding.

Shortly after my sense picks it up, I can hear the sound of a horse's footsteps.

Chapter 158

Adofu Ahrens

A horse's footsteps?

Who's coming?

If you are a good person, perhaps you may be able to take Nina away.

It may go against Nina's wishes but I still don't want Nina to die.

There was a large man on top of the horse in the distant sands.

His full beard made him seem older but, he had to be somewhere in his twenties or thirties.

He lacks a turban but, he shares a breastplate with the soldier I fought before.

Did he receive a report about me from him?

Although it's only one person this time, he appears different from the previous guys.

He seems stronger.

"Hihii-n!" TN:Insert horse noise here? EN:Horse noise inserted, maybe...

The horse raises a cry when it sees me and breaks into a sprint.

I guess I'll check the stats for now.

[Adofu Ahrens]

Tribe: Earth Huma

State: The seal of the Prisoner

Lv: 48/85

HP: 262/316

MP: 72/98
Atk: 243 + 32
Def: 262 + 24
Mana: 121
Speed: 172
Equipped:
Hand: [Harenae Soldier's Large Sword: C +]
Body: [Harenae soldier breastplate: C]

Characteristic skills:
[Gurisha Language: Lv6] [Swordsman: Lv7]

Resistant skills:
[physical Resistance: Lv5] [magic Resistance: Lv4] [venom Resistance: Lv1]
[slashing Resistance: Lv6] [Fall Resistance: Lv1] [paralysis Resistance: Lv2]

Normal skills:
[Shockwave: Lv5] [Clay: Lv2] [decoy: Lv5]
[large cleave: Lv4] [Spirit Unification: Lv6] [Armor Expert: Lv2]

Title Skills:
[Former Knight Chief: Lv-] [Sword King: Lv7]
[Powerful: Lv6]

This guy... He's a lot stronger than the previous soldiers.

I thought he just had more experience due to the beard.

Are you really human?

It would be dangerous if I received an attack from a guy with stats like that and equipment to boot.

I have to neutralize him with minimal damage and see if he can help Nina.

This large man, Adofu, was coming straight at me.

First off, let's try using [Telepathy].

It would be convenient if he stopped just with that but...

“Guru”

I turned and barked at the ball rabbit, moving away from Nina.

“Pefu”

『Hold on. Want to talk... 』

When trying to talk with [Telepathy] , the horse carrying Adofu increased its speed.

Adofu raised a sword that was almost the size of himself with a single hand and, glaring at me, slashed at the sky twice.

No use.

I don't have the leisure of doing this “gently”.

If I don't do this right, the ball rabbit may get hurt instead.

First of all, let's start with decreasing the risks.

“Peefuu!?”

I move the ball rabbit with my tail and fly to the side of Nina.

I was a little rough but, I didn't have much of a choice.

If I delayed, the ball rabbit could be in danger.

To stop Adofu head on, i make myself seem larger.

I fire off three [Kamaitachi] , aiming for the horse.

The first went to the left,the second drifted and slammed to the right, and the third was aimed at where he would avoid the second.

I am much faster than him.

If i separate him from his horse, I should be able to beat him quite easily...

“Haiyaa!”

Adofu shouts as he pulls on the reins and directs the horse to avoid the first and second.

All according to plan.

The third lands at the base of the horse.

Adofu hurled a sheath at the third [Kamaitachi] and adjusted the movement slightly.

It fell off to the side where the second one was fired and was avoided easily.

Even though there wasn't a choice, he still reacted quite quickly and without hesitation.

If he was a little off, I might have accidentally killed the horse when it was falling but, he didn't even flinch.

Its as if he's been through these situations countless times.

Although I know I'm facing a human, it's more like I'm facing a monster.

He thinks and moves accordingly. If it was any other, they should have taken some damage by now.

Adofu, who disregarded the [Kamaitachi] , closes the gap quickly.

It's to be expected of someone I've failed to drag from the horse.

Although with that kind of speed, it will be hard to counter any moves that aren't in a straight line.

I raise my left arm up and hold it at the ready.

I will grab Adofu with my left hand, while swiping the horse with the right.

Looking at my stance, Adofu raises his big sword to his side.

Is he challenging me with a charge?

If my arm receives the sword, Adofu and the horse will surely be separated if their movements are stopped.

Damage is likely to be taken but, if all goes well, the battle will end there.

I'm sure if I send them flying then he will stop resisting.

“RaaaH!”

Adofu lines up his sword ready to strike.

I turn my left hand to guard quickly and stretch my right hand to Adofu.

Adofu's eyes move from my left hand to the right.

He seemed to have noticed what's happening here and his voice leaked out.

But it's too late.

Neither the horse's power nor the arm which was wielding the sword can stop now.

The sword of Adofu arced around and hit like a train.

The Big sword hits my left arm.

It deals about the amount of damage I expected.

Adofu was hitting me with the broad side of the sword, not the blade.

He pulled the reins back at the same time the sword connected and flew onto his back from the force of the hit on me.

I stretched out a claw on my right hand over towards the nose of the horse.

The horse immediately reverses its body after landing, and starts running in the opposite direction of me.

After taking some distance, it looked back at me.

Whatsmore, it's repositioning itself.

Since the straight swing changed trajectories causing the sword to arch backwards, it allowed him to move with it. This is a feat which couldn't be done unless both the horse and the man were synchronized.

It seems that Adofu pushed himself a little hard as he used his arm to wipe the sweat from his brow.

No way, I didn't think there were any humans capable of such a feat. This thought floated about in my head, he must surely be a monster.

Chapter 159

One-on-One Fight on The Beach

Adofu charges at me once again

What should I do, a feint won't work anymore. The only reason it worked just now was because he was under the assumption that 'a dragon wouldn't be able to throw a feint'. So that has already been ousted from the beginning. After just using it, it is wise to wait a while until the idea of it has subsided through the heat of battle.

It will be difficult to inflict minimal damage on Adofu if we clash head on like this. It would be easier to proceed with my one-sided negotiations however. I don't want to settle this in a manner which would leave a bad impression though. If this goes on longer, then even if I ask him something... no, it wouldn't even be possible.

I want to avoid hitting him from the front as much as possible, but a feint is useless now. I have to think of a way to break through an opening.

This man Adofu... not only are his stats high but his mental fortitude also seems quite strong. I guess it is better to aim for his partner. It will be easier to take out the horse first.

I breathe in and lower my head and align my eyes with the horses.

“guruwaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!”

The sand was riled up a little with my roar as some of it flew up with the wind.

The horse which Adofu is riding on was scared with my [Roar] as its body began to tremble. It seems the little sandstorm also played a part in the performance. For just a moment, the horses speed dulled while heading towards me. This should be enough.

With such a man, I can't cut corners. It will hurt a little but please forgive me.

“Guruaa!”

When I hold up my arm, Adofu pulls the reins sideways. Adofu keeps his sights on me as he's holding the reins and sword on the other hand. My expression tightened up, seems my emotions leaked out.

Adofu began to release his murderous intent, probably after seeing my expression just now, he realized the desperate situation he was in. If things went as planned, then I managed to make him hesitate for a few seconds.

Although his stance shows that he's more than willing to fight... it looks a bit unnatural. In the first place, there isn't much room left for a counter with his current position. At most he will only be able to guard with that large sword.

I swipe my arm across the side and hit the horse in front of me. It will be advantageous if I take his mobility away.

The moment my arm hit the horse, Adofu released his hand from the reins and stood on the horse's back.

"Gihiyain!"

The horse I just hit collapses and rolls away while wailing. Adofu kicked off the horse and jumped up and landed on my right shoulder. Not good, he's by my head.

I predict the trajectory of the sword that is about to come and face towards my right shoulder with my mouth agape. Feeling that the sword touched my tooth I immediately bite down and succeeded in grasping Adofu's large sword with my mouth.

I jerk my head to the left. The large sword is pulled out of Adofu's hand and thrown into the air.

The large sword stabbed into the ground, scattering the sand around.

Adofu, who just had the sword pulled from him, loses his balance and falls off my shoulder towards my front.

This guy is stronger than I thought. It seems going at him softly will be ineffective. It will be necessary to administer some heavy damage.

I can still negotiate if I use [Rest] on him. Although our relationship will be a little

awkward at that point, it can't be helped. As long as we keep fighting like this, without exerting power, it will only continue on.

I aim at Adofu, who is falling, with my hand on top and smash straight down. Making sure to use my palm and not my claws. I'm sure he won't die from this.

Adofu rolled himself up in the air, flipping himself and kicking my palm. He was able to gain momentum with that as he quickly lands on the ground and rolls away while my hand smashes to the ground.

Why... why are you so persistent?

However, I at least was able to take both his horse and sword. He lacks proper mobility and reachable offensive power now.

The situation is better than before.

Adofu gets up and we glare at each other. Since it's come to this point, now is the time to suppress him.

When I move my shoulder Adofu bends his knee.

"Stop it please! Mr. Dragon, Mr. Dragon....."

I hear Nina's voice from behind. After hearing it, Adofu's eyes move from me to Nina. It seems that since Nina was lying in a shallow part of the beach far from here, Adofu had failed to notice.

"A person? Why are they here..."

It might be possible to negotiate now. I back up a few steps and give up my favorable position. Adofu seemed to understand what he overlooked before, as some of the tense air slightly dissipates.

Adofu confirms the position of his large sword and quickly returns his line of sight to Nina behind me.

"Hey, that woman there! Are you alright!?"

"M-Mr. Dragon is protecting Nina nya!"

When Nina shouted that Adofu's eyes rounded and gazed at me. Thinking that it was safe now, the ball rabbit runs up to my feet while dragging its ears.

"Pe, Pefu"

「moment, want to talk. Run to say」

Adofu was surprised when the ball rabbit appeared. The sight of the ball rabbit lining up next to a dragon rather than running away might have been strange. It seems he was at a loss for a moment but quickly returned to his normal facial expression. Adofu looks at the ball rabbit and Nina, as he opened his mouth.

"I understand. I surrender. Now, let me hear your story... also, I should tell you that I have a companion."

Adofu raises both of his hands showing that he no longer has any intention to fight.

Alright, it went well.

This man seems reasonable compared to the previous soldiers. Perhaps I can also have him take Nina. Since I don't know how it works with slaves, this may come out as threatening instead of negotiating. I am counting on the others sense of values in this case. As the ball rabbit is translating, my speech nuances might shift, so it's best to be careful not to talk much about that.

"Irushia, sorry, but there's been a change of schedule. Lower your sword and come out, I'd like to talk to this dragon for a while."

Adofu looks behind me and speaks out.

...Hah? Irushia?

Why does this person know my name?

Chapter 160

Brave

Adofu, did you say Irushia just now?

Can you see my status as well?

In addition to me, I had only met one other that could use this skill.

That strange slime in the woods.

He was talking about his skills.

I'm sure he could see the statuses.

Since someone else also had the ability, it would make sense that there could be others.

But Adofu shouldn't have this skill.

In any case, why would he say my name in this situation?

Usually , the words Adofu said would be directed towards someone who was hiding...

After thinking this far, I turn my eyes following Adofu's line of sight behind me.

Nobody's there.

There's only Nina at the shoal by the sea a little off from where Adofu's eyes are directed. Nina is squatting down in place while heavily breathing, probably tired from standing because of the disease.

She's looking at me worryingly.

I try looking around with [Presence Sense].

Although it's weak, I feel some magic in the sky.

Is there something there?

I raise my eyes and look up.

"Did you not hear? It's a ceasefire."

The moment Adofu said so, the space where I was looking shook and a man appeared. The man was straddling a white horse with wings growing out of it and held a sword in his hand.

"You turned our efforts meaningless Adofu. After going through so much trouble to gather its attention why did you purposefully expose me? I was going to engage it after you gave me the opening and let you retreat."

Apparently Adofu was to keep my attention to the front while that guy sneaked from behind to wait for a gap to strike. He was able to disappear, and I hardly felt any magic presence.

He probably possess a special skill.

The man has pale white skin and thin golden hair tied in a ponytail.

His eyelashes are long and I get the impression that he has delicate features.

He's not much bigger than Adofu. Actually he may even be as strong as Adofu. However, I don't feel any dignity that I felt from Adofu. He is giving off more of a disgusting feeling.

"Hmm, well at this Lv I would have been okay without taking so many safety precautions. I don't have much to worry about, but what kind of evil plague dragon is this?"

The man narrowed his eyes as a cold glint could be seen from them while a radiant smile floated on his face.

In the sword hand of the man, a little power accumulates.

Ah, not good.

This guy's just itching to fight. Perhaps he just doesn't want to talk, no, actually it's more like he's uninterested and just wants to get it out of his system. Those eyes of his are the eyes of a hunter looking at its prey.

It also seems that Adofu is struggling to stay quiet. Him riding on that winged horse makes it more troubling.

"Hey, Irushia! Put the sword down! If you're not going to cooperate, step back and leave it to me."

Ignoring Adofu's voice, he raises his sword towards the sky.

I raise both hands and prepare for the attack.

When I tried to find out what kind of attack was going to be used by following the movement of his eyes, our eyes met at point blank range.

"Well, why does a monster have the same name as myself? Normally I would feel bad."

The man says so, and the lifted sword is swung straight down.

The content of that statement was worrisome, but there's no time to think about that now.

It's a simple attack, but fast.

The sword is fused with magic, and it shines slightly.

I angle my right arm to break the man's position and decide to fight back with my left arm.

Anyhow, the objective right now is to swat down that horse. If he loses his horse then he might back down.

The moment I was readying my arm, I felt a strong heat on my skin before the sword hit.

It is more powerful than it looks.

My arm will be damaged if I take that with no protection.

I changed my plan, kicked the ground, and tried to get away from the man.

“[Heavens drop]!”

When the man swung his sword, the light that covered his sword stretched.

The extended light is coming toward my left shoulder.

Fast. It doesn't seem like I can avoid it.

I cover my shoulder with the left wing and try to defend it.

“Guuooo!”

When the light touched my wing, intense heat ran into my body all at once.

It was blown to the right from the power of the impact, and the world turned upside down, as my shoulder was slammed into the ground.

I roll across the ground scattering sand.

I was flung nearly 20 meters and was stopped by the friction with the ground.

My shoulder is sore.

The scales on my shoulder were peeled off from rubbing against the ground and blood was flowing out of the wound, but it strangely hurt more where the light connected with my shoulder.

When I tried to raise my voice in pain, i heard a loud roar in my ears.

My consciousness, which was unclear, is pulled back by the Roar.

I was losing my mind.

What did you do just now?

While i crawl over the sand, I look towards the spot i heard the explosions earlier.

A big crater is in the ground.

Is that the blow that slammed me to the ground?

It was good that I played it well.

If I hadn't received it decently, the situation could've been much more serious.

"Mr.Dragon!"

Nina yells.

Nina tried to come over here and stood up.

It was clear that standing up was her limit, due to the curse, she was trembling...

Nina's knees jerked and shook and she fell forward into the sea.

Sea water splashed and she let out a groan, but she still tried to stand up.

Don't be reckless, please... it doesn't look like you're doing well...

My body doesn't move well.

My HP was considerably damaged just now, too.

"Hey! I told you to stop Irushia!"

"I don't want to, and what are you talking about, Mr. Adofu? I helped you with a dangerous situation."

My body feels heavy.

My head is not turning well.

I tried to use [rest] , but it doesn't recover nearly enough.

My magic might be considerably high, but it might not be suitable enough for a quick recovery.

If I don't practice more, it's not likely to be much help when i need it.

I somehow lifted an eyes and put the man in sight.

The man was watching Adofu with a smile and laughing.

He's not even paying attention to me anymore.

Chapter 161

The Man

“guuuuu”.....

I manage to lift my body while groaning. My muscles are stiff and it's painful to move. I may have some abnormalities.

[Irushia]

Race: Evil Plague Dragon

State: Paralysis (small)

Lv: 44/75

HP: 98/343

MP: 199/236

Damn, I've been paralyzed.

What should I do.

That blond haired guy, contrary to his appearance, his strength is monstrous. He seems to be Adofu's companion and if I were to kill him it will be impossible to negotiate with Adofu. However it is not an opponent I can pull my punches on, even though his intentions are suspicious.

Even if I was caught in a surprise attack, it was amusing that it happened while he was right in front of me.

If I wanted to escape right now I wouldn't be able to grab both the ball rabbit and Nina as they are quite a bit of ways from me. Even if I was able to grab them and run, my opportunity to speak with Adofu would go to waste. If that were to happen, Nina's chances of survival would decline.

Well for now, I'll check that guy's stats.

The man gets off the winged horse and shakes his head as he looks at Adofu in disbelief. While he's at it I use [Status Check] on him.

[Normal Skill [Status Inspection: Lv6] information cannot be displayed]

```
-----  
[*****]  
!@#$@#: *****  
St@t$: ****  
@#$%: 78/100  
$%^: 602/602  
#$$#: 552/552  
-----
```

After such a long time the “information cannot be displayed” showed up. Everything from stats to skills is warped with strange symbols. That guy is just like that slime after all.

There was a somewhat uncomfortable feeling while checking his status. It wasn't because of the lack of information, although that was a little off putting, but there was some kind of strange atmosphere from the display.

Anyway, before thinking too deeply about it, those numbers that I saw. If the arrangement is similar to what I know, then that's a level of 78, with a max HP of 602. All his numbers are far higher than mine. His stats are even higher than that huge centipede I had a hard time against.

“Will I actually not have to use this fine sword?”

The man pulls out the sword and places it in his hand as he said so. He has three swords on his waist. One of them has a similar color to the equipment of the soldiers that I had met before. It may be something commonly offered in that walled city.

“Here Mr. Adofu, give it the final blow. As it is, If you go home without doing anything, you won't be able to proudly face the people will you?”

“But the dragon doesn't seem to hold any hostility, if he wanted to kill me then I would have already been dead, plus that Beastman over there...”

“Well, I'm fine with killing it myself if you're not up to it, so will you do it?”

“No, well...”

“I understand. It’s a fact that you won’t be quick to kill, isn’t that right Mr. Former Knight Chief?”

When the man said that, I could see Adofu’s face getting stiff. When the man saw Adofu’s reaction he covered his mouth and his shoulders shook a little. What, is he laughing?

...I don’t know what kind of relationship these two have, but anyway, Adofu makes a side glance towards me while the blonde guy doesn’t seem to care. I don’t know his background but his social status must be high, as he seems very confident. It may be because his surprise attack was successful that he’s rather calm at the moment.

That’s right, if I don’t do something now then this guy will surely finish me off.

Let’s try to gather as much information as possible while trying not to gather attention. In the meantime, I’ll let [Auto HP Recovery] heal me while I try to shake off this paralysis. This is a terrible situation, but while I can, I must remain calm and think things through. If at any moment I make a mistake then not only myself, but Nina and the ball rabbit might also be killed.

Perhaps I could do something about those garbled letters if I do something about whatever was giving me that strange feeling from earlier. When I first saw the slime, it had Lv3 [Status Inspection], he currently has Lv6. He could surely use something troublesome.

I stare at the man and once again use [Status Check].

[Normal Skill [Status Inspection: Lv6] information cannot be obtained]

I Intentionally remove parts of the screen that pop up in my mind.

[Irushia]

Race: Earth Huma

State: Normal

Lv: 78/100

HP: 602/602

MP: 552/552

Atk: 354

Def: 264+76

Mana: 347

Spd: 325

Equipment:

Body: [Water Dragon Robe: B+]

* * * * *:

[* * * :Lv-]

Characteristic Skill:

[God's Voice: Lv6] [Spirit Protection: Lv-] [Elf King's Blessing: Lv-] [Light Attribute: Lv-] [Gurisha Language: Lv6] [Sword Genius: Lv9] [Presence Sense: Lv6] [Stealth Step: Lv7]

Resistance Skill:

[Fall Resistance: Lv6] [Magic Resistance: Lv6] [Dark Attribute Resistance: Lv7] [Illusion resistance: Lv5] [Poison Resistance: Lv5] [Curse Resistance: Lv3] [Petrification Resistance: Lv5] [Instant Death Resistance: Lv4] [Paralysis Resistance: Lv3]

Normal Skill:

[Status Inspection: LvMAX] [Shock Wave: Lv6] [Ten Point Stab: Lv5] [Skyfall: Lv6] [Ground Upheaval: Lv5] [Luna Lucian: Lv7] [Summon: Lv7] [Mirage: Lv3] [Holy: Lv5] [High Rest: Lv5] [Quick: Lv4] [Power: Lv5] [Mana Barrier: Lv2] [Physical Barrier: Lv4]

Title Skill:

[The Chosen One: Lv-] [Hero: Lv5] [The Brave: Lv7] [Cunning: Lv9] [Evil Path: LvMAX] [Liar: Lv8] [Foul King: Lv9] [Calamity: Lv3] [Laplace Interference Authority: Lv3] [Insect King Contract Holder: Lv-]

It worked.

This guy has a lot of skills. Was that what made me feel that something was wrong? I don't really understand it but did the slime also have this many?

However, things are still not looking up even after seeing this. Looking at it again, I was yet again reminded, if I fight this guy right now I won't win. I'm better off fighting with that centipede and even then I'm still inferior to it.

Besides that, why do you have the same name as me?

There's no second name, it's just Irushia. I heard that the name originated from the name of a flower. I wouldn't go as far as making fun of it though, as I also have such a name...

Among the people I've met so far there have been no humans with only one name apart from those born of low status, but I don't see him being one. I guess the system here works differently than what I know, how strange.

Along with [God's Voice] there are too many suspicious looking title skills.

Seriously what is this guy.

The man takes his eyes off Adofu and looks over my way. His eyes turn sharp as he faces his body towards me while clicking his tongue.

"My my my, how annoying. This is enough, if the former Knight Chief won't do it then I will."

This is bad, he's coming. I still have paralysis, will I be able to handle it?

To begin with, do I flee or fight? Both contain high risks, I just don't know what my course of action should be.

「Look above you」

I suddenly hear telepathic thoughts.

Above? What do you mean?

"Ah?"

The man seemed to have also heard it and he stopped his feet to look in the air. At that moment the sand scattered by the man's feet as the ball rabbit jumped out.

"Pefu!"

Five fireballs appeared around the ball rabbit as it jumped out at the man. This is the ball rabbits skill [Light].

The man hesitated for a moment before jumping backwards and swatted the fire ball with his bare hand.

That time I lost sight of the ball rabbit, it seems that it dug a hole and made its way over to the man's feet.

"Gu..... Guruaaaaa!"

Hey! Hey! ball rabbit what are you doing!

This isn't an opponent you can win against!

Chapter 162

Tale of a Certain Brave Man 5 (side story)

An evil plague dragon huh, doesn't look so great. Since I'd never seen one before I had thought that it might be an A ranked monster... But it was just a B rank, and to think I worried a little.

Since the actual rank of rare monsters are sometimes exaggerated, it's best to approach cautiously until I can check their status.

The official ranks of monsters seem to have been decided by the former hero over 500 years ago. As such, the gap between ranks might have changed a bit. The former hero is said to have properly recorded all types of monsters from his time, but there may have been a few he missed.

In any case, I did not know if it was B rank or higher so in my mind it was clearly higher... But who would have thought, the sand centipede is more troubling than this fellow.

I put in so much work to make Adofu a decoy but who would have thought that the two would stop fighting.

Even though it possesses [God's Voice]... well it doesn't really matter anyway. Although I have heard stories of demon kings possessing such a trait as well, but it's only that, a story. I've never actually seen the real thing.

Also, it's annoying that such a small time dragon has the same name as mine. Having a name means that there is the possibility that it has an owner. Did that slave who's near death give it to him? No, it's hard to imagine that such a troublesome dragon is being controlled by such a thing. If anything, the dragon is carrying around the slave by order of its master.

If the owner is around, should I have him cooperate with me... I intended to leave Haranae anyway so why not? Besides, it should be amusing to see Haranae get attacked. I won't be blamed for it, as long as its name stays hidden, nobody would be the wiser.

“Since I think you will be beneficial I will not use this sword.”

While I say that I sheath my holy sword.

I’ll let Adofu receive the credit for this one.

Since I have already shaved off a good portion of its HP, I will have Adofu handle the rest and I’ll handle the dismantling. I’ll take everything that I can from it till there’s nothing left.

Truthfully, myself alone is enough, as if I would really need the help from a lump of muscle. He seriously believes that I had arranged everything for him to help me.

The only way to show it to him is by having him demonstrate for all to see. I’m grateful that he shows so much trust, truly a fool that can’t be saved. A fool for not being able to understand the result of his actions and what he has brought upon himself, he should die regretting it.

“Here Mr. Adofu, give it the final blow. As it is, If you go home without doing anything, you won’t be able to proudly face the people will you?”

Adofu looks at the dragon sprawled out on the ground and returns his gaze towards me.

“But the dragon doesn’t seem to hold any hostility, if he wanted to kill me then I would have already been dead, plus that Beastman over there...”

Ah, really, so annoying.

What the heck is he even saying, this idiot.

Would it be better if I just finish him off as well? I don’t feel like using any more honorifics on this guy. Any suspicions directed towards me would be meaningless anyway should Adofu not return to Haranae.

“Well, I’m fine with killing it myself if you’re not up to it, so will you do it?”

I slacked my tone a bit because of what was going through my head. Ah, I don’t care anymore.

“No, well...”

“I understand. It’s a fact that you won’t be quick to kill, isn’t that right Mr. Former Knight Chief?”

Ah, I finally said it.

Even though I was trying to be careful not too.

Having heard the phrase ‘former Knight Chief’, Adofu’s face stiffens. His face is so amusing it makes me want to laugh. I cover my mouth and try to manage my laughter.

Even though I had told Adofu that I would have that title lifted. He is probably trying to figure out why I had said that in the first place and is beginning to suspect something.

Then, I felt something watching me. Turning my eyes, I noticed the dragon just quietly staring at me. What, are you checking my status?

The dragon had surely possessed [Status Check] as well, so it should be able to see my status as well. So him doing so is only natural, but still, it does not feel good. It is probably trying to come up with a countermeasure for my skills, which I do not mind, but I don’t feel comfortable with it viewing my titles.

“My my my, how annoying. This is enough, if the former Knight Chief won’t do it then I will.”

When I glared at it the dragon slightly trembled. It looks scared, no way I’m being treated as a monster by a monster.

「Look above you」

As I was ready to take a step some words popped into my head. Is this [Telepathy]?

Did that dragon have such a skill? I didn’t see it through my skill. Haa, this is getting annoying, I’ll look to humor you but after that I’m finishing it.

“Ah?”

I raise my face and look towards the sky.

At that time, the sand at my feet exploded and a small pink monster came out.

“Pefuu!”

It’s a peach ball rabbit.

Is this the one who has [Telepathy]?

Even so, the ball rabbit should be a gentle monster that is often treated as a pet, coupled along with its high crisis perception, why did it jump out like this? When I think about it, it was beside that evil plague dragon not too long ago, so is it the dragon’s companion?

Several fireballs float around the peach ball rabbit as it attacks me. I take a step back and slap the flame ball away with my hand. It is only a D rank monster after all.

“Gu... guruaaaa!”

When I put my hand on the sword at my waist the dragon growled somewhat sorrowfully.

What, is this really the dragon’s companion?

It’s supposed to be an evil and vicious dragon, yet it acts strange by getting along with other monsters and even picking up slave women. Moreover, who would have thought that he also possessed a name which is synonymous with the Brave and titles of heroes like [Small Hero] and [Spirit Relief].

That evil plague dragon may be interesting. Lets play with it a little.

First of all, I’ll kill this peach ball rabbit and see how it reacts. The paralysis should be wearing off by now anyway.

The corners of my mouth lift instinctively.

I was going to slash the peach ball rabbit with my sword but stopped. I will use my bare hands to kill it, I do not need to use weapons on a D rank monster such as this.

I lift my hand and pull out my sword sheath as the peach ball rabbit closes in.

The cheeks of the peach ball rabbit puff and swell.

“Pehyu!”

While I was wondering what it was doing, the next moment a large amount of needles were ejected from the peach ball rabbit’s mouth.

These... are cactus needles?

It seems to have saved up stock to be used for ammunition. What an annoying trick.

I turn the sheath of my sword and parry the needles.

“pee, peefuu!”

I grab the peach ball rabbit by the ears and hold it in place. When our eyes met I lightly smiled.

The peach ball rabbit’s body trembles.

“Guugaaa!”

Together with the roar the evil plague dragon’s gigantic figure pitches forwards. It was trying to forcefully move while it’s muscles were still hardened by paralysis.

Nice, very good.

You should at least react that much or this will be boring.

I released the peach ball rabbit’s ears and kicked it. It flew off but not by that much because of course, I wasn’t able to put much force into it while holding it.

“Beefu!!”

The peach ball rabbit lessened the damage by extending its ears as it came in contact with the ground and immediately got back up. A ‘Tsk’ is let out as I turn around.

“Umm, can you take care of that hindrance, Mr. former Knight Chief?”

I said to Adofu who was standing behind me with a complicated expression.

How bothersome.

How I see it, Adofu's job as a decoy is already over and the worst case scenario has already faded. Although I was going to slowly crush the dragon, should I reverse our targets?

Or should I quickly kill Adofu and take my time subjugating the evil plague dragon?

Chapter 163

Tale of a Certain Brave Man 6 (side story)

“Irushia, ever since we went out on the subjugation you’ve had a strange face. Whats going on?”

Said Adofu in a crude manner.

I had suspected that he had been suspicious of me already but did he already have those suspicions before we left on the subjugation?

At that time I had already treated the plan as a success and may have been a little too excited.

So now, what to do?

Right now I should finish up with Adofu, since I still have to deal with the evil plague dragon, but things have become pretty complicated.

That plague dragon’s paralysis began to wear off just as I was about to confront Adofu, spoiling the fun.

For Adofu, I had thought of an end that was suitable for him, and had gone through the trouble of arranging preparations.

It is not very pleasant for me that this had become tedious.

But for the plague dragon, I wanted to torment it slowly.

Besides, that thing is also an owner of [God’s Voice].

There is a possibility that the story related to [God’s Voice] that that bastard priest is hiding can be drawn out from that plague dragon.

This is a rare opportunity to try to torment it with various methods.

“O... oi. Oi! What happened! What’s with the silence...”

It’s so bothersome.

I’m trying to think of how to return the favor to you, yet this idiot thinks I can’t hear him from this close a distance?

“...My apologies. Certainly, maybe I was a little distraught. That was not like me. It might be due to the miasma from that evil dragon?”

While holding my head and staring at ground I shake my head.

How many times must I deceive this idiot?

Anyway, is this the time to be thinking like this?

When I glanced at his eyes I could still see the color of doubt within them.

Remembering my past mistake, will I repeat the same thing?

In order to restore Adofu’s trust, should I follow up on my words and actions from a little while ago?

I wonder if I got carried away a bit too much.

Erm..... Considering Adofu’s personality, once I do this..... No. But, I don’t like having someone who doubts me by my side.

I can’t bring myself to have a conversation with that dragon and slave woman, even in this situation.

“Ahh-, enough already, isn’t this good enough already? So troublesome.”

“Irushia?”

In order to understand my words, Adofu calls my name again.

I ignore his call and unsheathe my sword, heading towards Adofu.

“Mr. Former Knight Chief, maybe for awhile, you can practice with me? That longsword

over there, won't you pick it up?"

I tilt my head a bit to provoke him.

"What are you talking about, so suddenly."

Adofu who lapses, retreats.

It's slow. Do I have to thoroughly teach you from 1 to 10?

"No, in truth I wanted to see my own growth against the former Knight Chief and set this all up just for that. In fact, around four years ago, I really wanted to kill a few civilians in public so that you would have to go out and handle it, but the priest wasn't so enthusiastic about it and turned down the proposal, so here we are now. If I were to do such a thing, I'm sure former Knight Chief would become filled with a sense of justice and want to defeat me, but..... the risk for me at the time was too great."

Adofu opens his eyes and clenches his teeth.

Gradually, even the dense Adofu also seems to have noticed it in the end.

"This is why I decided to kill the fiancée and the younger brother of the Knight Chief, and then push all the blame on the Knight Chief. Once you had entered prison, the status of a Hero became useful as there were many opportunities to use it. Really, it was easy to pretend to be a Hero. With my magic, I can create as many misleading pieces of evidence as I want, because I have many acquaintances who are good at those sort of things. In the first place, people who doubt me are not living in this country. Because both the idiots from the church did not get on well with Mr. Knight Chief, the investigation was done in a sloppy way."

Adofu is staring at me silently.

Good, good reaction. That is the reaction I want to see.

Adofu, that fellow must be thinking of killing me now.

But, that will not come true.

Adofu's sword will not hit me, even if it hit, it will not cause a fatal injury to me.

There is no reason to lose.

While thinking about wanting to kill you, I will continue to trample over you.

The humiliation I received from four years ago, I will return it a hundredfold.

By doing so, that blemish in my life will be resolved.

Looking at the expression of Adofu, I felt a sense of relief in my chest.

Aah, this day finally came, how many days have I waited for this moment to come?

Thank you, Adofu.

Because of you, I would not have been successful if I had not been humiliated, I would not have put my life on the line to level up during my travels.

The day where I feel a refreshing feeling that I have never felt before should have never come.

In this particular matter, I will give my thanks with appreciation. So, at best I will let you suffer and die while eating sand. If you hold a grudge, you should hate your own carelessness when you showed off that day.

Adofu walks toward the sword that was stuck in the ground.

He pulls it out, makes a big swing and holds it towards me.

“.....First, listen closely.”

“Uhn timer?”

“Regarding the murder of my younger brother and Sylphy, is it because you wanted to conquer me with your sword?”

“Sylphy?”

When I ask again, Adofu’s eyes flashed with bloodlust.

Aah, his fiancée. I did not know every single name. I was not interested to know.

That woman, which part of this ugly man did that woman fall in love with.

“No way, that is not the reason. Do I look like an idiot?”

He found the time to tell a joke.

“In Haranae, if a prisoner escapes, there are cases where the close relatives are executed. Although, it is to prevent escape, there have been instances of it happening.”

I have declared in the city that I will bear sin, but of course I do not actually need to bear it.

In the city, I pretend to be an innocent young man who believes in the benefactor from the past and pleases the crowd from my own standpoint.

If deceiving is a crime, then that is the mistake of the crowd who have allowed this path. That crowd is just as guilty as I am.

I blame this kind of behavior.

Humans, it is their own fault for not thinking.

“When I return to Haranae, regarding the matter of the Knight Chief, how should I report it? ‘Mr. Adofu was killed by a plague dragon’, I think I will report it like that?”

Good, good.

It’s really good. This is the best feeling.

As a matter of fact, if you think about it normally, it is likely that your relatives will be executed regardless of how I reported to the church about this case.

For this, I applaud.

There were also rumors about Adofu’s close relatives being suspicious of the Church and that opposition towards the Church is spreading.

That is the priest’s problem.

If Adofu escapes in the middle of the turmoil during the plague dragon subjugation,

they will be glad to execute Adofu's close relatives.

The set-up is in place.

In this case, even if I lose, not only will he not be able to avenge his younger brother and fiancée, but his close relatives will be executed as well.

This includes Adofu's parents too.

This is a fight which I will not be able to lose, no, this is a battle that I will not lose.

Therefore, Adofu cannot win. He definitely cannot win.

Clearly, with this much difference in status, it would be difficult to lose.

Die while suffering in helplessness and despair.

"Come on Adofu! Without magic, show me what a soldier of Haranae can do!"

I will use the sword given to soldiers from Haranae, to put an end to Adofu.

I will not use the Holy Sword or the Cursed Sword.

Even if I use it, you would still know the heart crushing difference in absolute strength. Instead, I will use it to torment you.

"IRUSHIAAA"

Adofu rushes in while shouting.

Chapter 164

Tale of a Certain Brave Man 7 (side story)

Adofu swings his sword while rapidly reducing the distance between us.

I could easily chop off your wrist and behead you, but I have no intention to end it so easily.

Luckily, it seems that the plague dragon is still not able to move.

I'll take my time to carefully and slowly torment you to my liking.

Since Adofu is carefully watching me with his eyes, he was able to read my sword's movements and dodge.

After four consecutive close range exchanges, Adofu grew impatient and tried to attack with a diagonal slash while jumping back to evade.

What's this now? It doesn't even feel like I'm fighting.

The ability of Haranae's strongest soldier is too poor.

"Are you acting stupid? Aren't you lacking a little discipline and training?"

Although Adofu would often get ridiculed in prison, I've yet to see this kind of reaction.

Even after all that, is not all that he's doing right now a bit disappointing?

Even after all that provocation, it's sad that this is all he could muster.

I wanted to torment you little by little, but I must refrain from doing so as I must still deal with that dragon.

I don't have much time to play. Really, I'm busy.

Now to further unsettle Adofu, it's better to approach from a different perspective.

“How is it? To know that you were the reason for your brother and fiancée’s death, do you like the feeling of witnessing those close to you being executed? Come on, come on, if you don’t hurry up it will become a serious matter.”

“Such a twisted heretic!”

Oh, he’s mad, he’s mad.

I knew it, such a visually unsatisfying response is not worth it.

For this, I have everything well prepared. It will not amuse me if you fight against this.

Adofu lets his emotion take over and raises his sword.

He’s still moving as usual, what should I do about this?

Maa, I understand the feeling of thoroughly evading a strike swung with full strength.

Well, I do feel that the strength behind his swings have become somewhat better as I was evading.

It was expected for him to ‘at least’ achieve this much.

If only Adofu could look at our statuses there will not be such a boring battle, he would have showed his neck for me.

My, what a pity.

I run beside Adofu.

When the sword swung down towards me, it missed and created a gust of sand on the ground.

“Gu.....”

Adofu frowned, covering his ear with his right hand.

“There have certainly been many words of praise about you before, was it ‘There is no way to reach his strength, you will only receive a counterattack’ such as I have now, am I right?”

Because I was smiling mockingly, I was glared at by Adofu.

“Right, this is not needed, so I’m returning this.”

When I ran beside him just now, I slashed one ear off using the edge of the sword.

I swing the sword lightly, Adofu’s ear is lightly tossed into the air.

Using the fuller, I hit Adofu’s ear. (*T/N: fuller – the flat side of a sword*)

Planning to return it by hitting it over, Adofu’s ear is smashed into pieces of meat and blood is sent flying everywhere.

“Oops, my apologies.”

However, it truly is like the former Knight Chief.

He was able to suppress the blood loss somewhat by pressing against it and immediately corrects himself to wield the sword with both hands again.

“From now onwards, I will devote myself.”

I kick the ground, to launch towards Adofu.

From the shaken expression of Adofu, he did not expect I would move this early.

“Come on, come on!”

From the right and left, I swing my arm to attack from both sides.

“Isn’t it too late to guard the attack now? Ah, isn’t it useless, shouldn’t you just sit down?”

Adofu is barely keeping up with me by adjusting my speed accordingly.

Of course, now Adofu does not have the luxury to counter attack, exhausting himself by dealing with attacks one by one.

Without giving him the time to recover his posture, his stance gradually collapses.

Finally, Adofu loses his posture and shows a big gap in his stance.

Before he swings down with his sword, I send him flying with a kick in the stomach.

“Gufuu!?”

Adofu’s huge body is sent flying, crashing with his back on the ground.

Even so, the sword did not leave his hand, he is reputed to be strong willed, it’s painful and unsightly.

Adofu stands up immediately and readies his sword towards me.

Indeed, he has become pitiful and I think I should face him as an opponent without a sword.

Even bare hands are enough. However, even that method is pitiful.

“Youuuuu!”

I extend my arm against Adofu who runs towards me while shouting.

“A 5-move strike. Maybe I should get his wrist with a 5-move strike.”

From the moment I announce that, I ready my sword slowly, and construct a strategy to fight in my head.

“Here, 1st , 2nd , 3rd.....”

Strike first, to get the initiative.

It is a painful feeling, being overpowered in a contest of swords, letting you know that you weren’t as good as you thought you were.

“4th strike.”

The speed of my attack is raised.

His guard speed is slow, Adofu’s stance has collapsed.

Before his guard is ready, I strike with my left hand.

“And then this is 5th strike!”

Aiming at the left arm, I make a small turn with the sword and drive the sword into his arm.

As foretold, With 5 strikes Adofu’s wrist is chopped off.

I cannot suppress the corners of my mouth from curving up.

To see Adofu’s expression, I raise my eyes.

“Hmm?”

With one hand, Adofu directs his sword towards me and swings it down.

This person, purposely extended his left hand to restrict my movement.

Maa, if it is this speed difference, from here it would be easy to get away from here.

It’s about time I break his will. It’s a shame, but I have to end this little warmup.

I’ll have to break your will once more.

Giving up on Adofu’s hand, I kicked the floor and went down. *(T/N: crouch)*

“[Shock Wave]!”

The slash of the longsword holds some force.

It was clever of him to have lasted until this point.

Although I am reluctant, I have no choice but to accept it.

There is no meaning in doing this, it’s annoying.

Enough, let’s quickly kill Adofu and get this over with.

I have no plan to kill Adofu in one strike, it would spoil the fun. A man who cannot read

the atmosphere.

That is why the church hates him.

I cross my arms while receiving the attack of [Shock Wave].

Aa, a useless attack.

Adofu throws his sword ahead this time.

If it is just this much, no matter how, I can still handle it. What is this guy thinking?

Did he understand the difference in ability and literally threw it? Or did he feel like returning a blow? Did he lose the will to fight?

No matter what, the conclusion has been somewhat decided. I wonder if I had played with him a little bit too much.

The thrown sword is dodged by bending my back.

Adofu extends his hand toward me.

“[Clay]!”

At this moment, with that level of magic, what are you trying to do?

Behind me, there is the sound ‘Kachi’, the sound of metal clashing.

Is the sword being bounced back?

By using the sound, the trajectory of the sword can be predicted, it would not be able to hit me.

Yes that’s right.

With the ground raised up by magic clay, it is for the thrown sword to bounce back and hit the target, a desperate trick.

I keep my eyes focused on my back.

I tilt myself and Adofu's sword flies past my inclined body.

That beautiful evasive movement, it is enough to reach the artistic realm.

If this guy were to practice like this more often, his swordsmanship would improve.

That's why it's weak.

"Hai hai, good. One hit with a slash, is that satisfying enough?..... Aa?"

When I tilt my neck, Adofu jumps towards this place.

In mid air, Adofu holds his sword in a messy way and just like that, it heads towards my face.

There is no strategy, just blind movement.

With this position it cannot be avoided.

It is easy to counter. After that, it will be possible to kill Adofu, the attack will not be stopped.

Even with magic, it will not be able to turn the situation right now.

Chapter 165

Tale of a Certain Brave Man 8 (side story)

Ah, really, this has already become stupid.

Absurdly so. Even though I already had no chance of losing, I didn't think that it would become like this.

After clicking my tongue, I point towards Adofu.

"[Grovel]"

At the word I lower my finger to the ground. The longsword leaves Adofu's hands. The sword loses its momentum and nails to the ground as is without resistance.

"Guhwaa!?"

I fix the sword to the sheath and rise while sweeping the sand.

"Haa, so boring"

It's an effect of the prisoner engraving which the priest put on. If you add in some magic and give orders then it's possible to control them to a certain extent. This is insurance, since I took the role of watching him to make sure he doesn't escape during his temporary release.

It seems that it doesn't always work depending if they hear it or the content of the command, but it's easy enough to use if it's only used to stop movement for a moment.

However, I did not expect to rely on this, as I was going to kill you after showing you your incompetence. This really makes me white.

"Co-coward... you bastard..."

Adofu says while looking at me.

Is he foolish or stupid, just what exactly is he misunderstanding.

“No, even if such an attack were to hit there wouldn’t be much of a problem, but since your petty mind thought that it would I took the liberty to show you just how foolish you are. The title of knight is crying.”

Even if Adofu’s attack just now hit, it could be solved with [High Rest]. Adofu is also in no state to try to run, even if he could, I could just deal with everything using magic.

However, even with [High Rest] there is still a chance for scars to remain if there is too much damage. Can I really risk a scratch on my beautiful face? and by Adofu? What a silly idea.

There was already no chance of winning against me for Adofu to try such an underhanded method. I even went as far as limiting myself for a better fight, but I will not go so far as taking such a stupid strike. How dare he not realize this and attempt such a crude method on me.

“Now then, goodbye, you have suited your purpose here.”

I step on Adofu’s shoulder and pull out my curse sword from its sheath. I stabbed the vicious crimson blade into Adofu’s back.

“Ahhaaaa!”

It’s not a vital point, but it will still hurt.

The cursed sword, blood sucking princess.

It’s a sword built for war and torture, which was said to be created by the former demon kings subordinate. A sword which inflicts a curse and siphons the life force from the opponent and returns it to the owner. All the while, slowly eradicating the opponent due to the powerful curse and poison.

I wonder if leaving Adofu alone here will be alright? There’s no need for me take further action. After he suffers severely he will die.

“Well then, escape prisoner Adofu”

I take my foot off Adofu and tap his back lightly.

Adofu screams while groaning, as I spit on his face.

Oh no, I'm feeling a little ill.

I thought that I could make a clean break from Adofu but my feelings have become odd in the end. Is this what they call dragonflies in the stomach, or is it indigestion?... well, it's nice either way. This fuzzy feeling, maybe I should settle it with that evil plague dragon.

The plague dragon can move its limbs but it doesn't seem like it could move them steadily yet. It's not amusing that it could already move but then again it is a pretty hefty dragon. If the paralysis stays for a bit then that dragon won't be able to drag that big body around.

Also that peach ball rabbit... did it escape? Well, of course it did. Even if I try to track it down there are too many monsters around to do so, especially if it dives in the ground. I don't really need to find it anyway, since even a surprise attack from it will be easy to deal with.

There's also that slave woman at the shallows. Strange things were said between her and Adofu a while ago and her relationship with the plague dragon seems good. If so, then something should be done.

After taking a glance at the plague dragon I advance towards the slave woman.

".....N-No!"

The slave woman shouts with a trembling voice as I approach.

Hearing the woman's voice, the plague dragon raises a roar. It was a roar thirsting for blood. Bingo, looks like this did the trick. You were provoked enough to try to move even with such a paralysis on you? I can understand the full extent of its abilities as well since I could see its status. Looks like this dragon is not very wise.

Oh, that slave woman has characteristic cat ears. A Felis Huma?

After looking at her status I found that her name is Nina Nifa. She has little ability to fight properly, at the most enough to hunt E rank monsters.

That one slave merchant certainly worked with felis huma. So did she survive from

being feed for the sand centipede? It was reported that the plague dragon chased after the sand centipede after all.

I could bet that the slave merchant wouldn't have even dreamt that the dragon was trying to help humans. This evil plague dragon is quite good in nature.

I realized that I was instinctively liking out my tongue.

Oops, that's bad. I need to fix this habit especially if I want to go in public.

However... looking from near, this beast slave has quite the well balanced face. But maybe since she has been beside that plague dragon for some time there is a [Curse] status abnormality, which makes her face pale. However such a thing does not cover up natural beauty.

Big inclined eyes and pupils peculiar to a cat, a small mouth that draws out the desire to protect, and an ideal shape for a nose that draws emphasis but not too overwhelming. Its beautiful and completely unnatural to make it a slave and stuff it into a large carriage. The seller should not have usually bothered transporting across the desert and instead arrived elsewhere. So was this beast woman for the purpose of negotiations to lower the tariff? or was it promised to an executive of the church in advance?

What an unexpected find.

This woman is a flower. Just killing her wont do.

I have something else to think about while tormenting that plague dragon, it may not be bad to sell it. It now has a moderate value. However my involvement could be easily traced back to me with my position even if I had someone meditate. It will certainly be heard by that slave merchants ears and even if I could seal his mouth, I'm not too sure if I can seal the rumors from spreading.

However, even with such a situation it still seems wasteful to kill. If I were to defeat the dragon and help the slave then it could be presented as a favor to me. If I advertise myself as the Brave man, the Hero, I can take care of that annoying priests mood. Especially if I take care of Adofu for them then I can have this souvenir.

I planned to leave Haranae in the near future and it won't be to bad to add another traveler. It will be worthwhile to have her stand at my side. Such a beautiful woman

can be used for negotiating with a nobleman. I can lend her overnight and if they get in the way I can just sell her at that time. Among the rich there are many with weird tastes of sub-popular hobbies, so it will be worth the trouble. If I don't sell it along the way, I can just kill it and throw it away.

"Now Now Now, calm down won't you? I only came to help you, now how do you say your name?"

I brighten up the tone of my voice and reach out with a giglish smile.

I already know the name, but if I ask a simple question then their alertness somewhat softens. Even if it doesn't it will still be an opportunity to read the intentions of the other.

If you were to look at my state earlier you wouldn't think I was human.

But that doesn't matter at the moment.

At any rate, its a woman that's been accompanying a plague dragon.

Even if there are no others to rely on, its impossible she has ordinary nerves. This fellow seems like the kind to do anything it takes to survive. Perhaps that was the reason all the other slaves that were left as bait died while she was the only one who survived.

She may perhaps jump at the chance to go with the most reliable one here. Actually, if this woman wants to live then there is no other choice then to try to flatter me. No matter how uncomfortable she may feel.

"Ni....."

The woman says with a shaky voice.

Then it sounds like she swallowed her saliva as she dug her fingernails into her thighs to suppress her trembling.

"Ni? What starts with Ni?"

I ask back gently.

At that moment the woman's eyes opened wide.

"Hinyaa!"

Although she was kneeling on the ground in suffering just a moment ago, she kicked off the ground and rapidly closed in on me.

I did not know what happened. But I was at last able to understand after the woman's nails tore the thin skin of my cheeks.

Ah, this woman, slashed at my face with her claws.

"fu, fufu... fu..."

I did not think my gentle gesture would be returned to me with a claw. I trace the injuries with my finger.

"To be scuffed with the claw of a dirty beastman, no, it was a great show of courage, yeah... really, Right"

Plans have changed. Let's kill it after all.

This is easier, that way I don't have to think of anything extra, it will be very refreshing.

"Nya..... ahh!"

After the back of my hand strikes the jaw, she falters and I grab her by her delicate neck and lift her.

"Guuruooooooooo!"

At that moment, the dragon roared out.

When I look, its facing the sky as its roaring. Is this the appearance of finally being able to shake off the paralysis?

I let go of the woman's neck.

She kneeled down and fell on the spot.

It seems that she was considerably weakened from the curse to begin with. Even if not by my own hands she will die.

But that plague dragon, as soon as it escaped paralysis it launched a surprise attack of what was it? [Kamaitachi]?

Wasn't it foolish to inform me of it by getting up and roaring? Well, such a move won't be able to hit anyway.

Perhaps because I was squeezing the woman's neck, did you purposely reveal yourself to make me let go?

".....fu, fufufu"

Laughter, I couldn't bear it.

This plague dragon, I may be able to use it. Its interesting, a funny little chap.

It is regrettable that I will kill you here.

I like it. I will place my attention on you for now since I've already dealt with Adofu. Let's prepare a more suitable place of death for an evil plague dragon who likes humans.

Chapter 166

Invitation

When I apply some strength and bend my legs, my body rises up. At last, the paralysis seems to be fading. This way, I can move.

That blond bastard, he's had his back turned towards me for a while. And he seems to be having some kind of conversation with Nina. I try to roar, but he's not paying attention to me at all. Does he think that I'm still unable to move due to the paralysis, or does he think it doesn't matter even if it does wear off?

Certainly that guy is strong. Abnormally strong. If we really fight each other, with my status I definitely cannot win.

But, he has huge openings due to his negligence. I don't know the whole story, but I was left aside and he started to duel with Adofu. From a third person view, it is obvious that he sees Adofu as inferior and that he's not fighting seriously.

Now, if I dash toward that back, I might be able to get a hit in. If I throw my body weight into it and make him eat a [Nutcracker], even with that status he should not be unharmed.

I hold my breath and focus more strength in my hind legs. I'll leap toward his back and strangle him with my claws, then fly into the sky in one motion and knock him to the ground. I am not sure whether this will work. I do not remember [Nutcracker] ever working on a superior opponent, but that's because the opponents that were stronger than me have generally been huge, so I was not able to carry them and fly. There is hardly anyone with such an outrageous status in such a small body.

Perhaps this will go well, or perhaps he'll easily shake free. In the latter case, I will most probably be killed at that point, and the likelihood for that to happen is high. Maybe he'll even chop off my head without looking back. But, there is no chance of me winning in a normal exchange of blows. If this drags on, there is the possibility that both Nina and the ball rabbit will also be killed. I have to do it.

The moment I became determined, I saw Nina scratch the face of that man. O, oi, Nina,

what have you done! I understand how you feel, but recklessly pissing him off is dangerous!

That guy was stunned and had an emotionless face for a second. Then, a smile slowly emerged on his face. Just like the one in Noppera art (*TN: imagine slenderman smiling*), a creepy smile.

That guy held out a his hand as if he wanted to request for a handshake, and then hit Nina's face with it. That guy moves towards the staggering Nina and lifts her up by the neck.

Nina will be killed. Even if I leap towards there now, I will not make it. For Nina, even if that guy did not strangle her neck she will still die due to [Dragon Scale].

Rather, that may be more agonizing compared to this. Why? It's because it is a curse from an evil dragon. It could even be said that the final result is just occurring sooner.

But, even so.....

[.....until the end, can you stay with me?]

Nina and I, together we made that promise. As if I could let her fall into the hands of that brute and be killed.

“GUuRUoooOOO!”

I heave my body up and roar with my face pointed towards the sky.

That guy seems to have noticed that my paralysis has worn off, as he looks back at me while releasing the hand that was holding Nina. Good, I have successfully directed his attention towards here. I kick the ground with my hind legs and close the distance between us.

I have lost the element of surprise, but it's not like I had a good chance in the first place. I still have a chance of winning, just like when he faced Adofu, he handicapped himself and tried to prolong the match. If you face a life and death matter in such a easygoing manner, there is bound to be a critical gap.

“.....fu,fufufu”

Is there something wrong? That guy started to laugh. Really, what is wrong with this guy?

“Gurua!”

I swing my arm up and aim at his head with my claw. By adjusting the speed on purpose, I did not give my all in that attack. That guy unsheathed his sword and defended against my claw in a leisurely manner. ‘Kiin’, the sound of metal rang, my arm is put to a halt.

The purpose of adjusting the speed is to bring out the carelessness in that guy even if there is only a little bit in him. If there is a mistake, then I will be killed and that will be the end. With the difference in status, I cannot think of any other way for me to have a chance of winning besides this. There is a chance that he may not deliver a finishing blow but instead do something to paralyze me again like his first attack. It is a gamble with a slim chance of winning.

Claw and sword clash with each other. In the midst of all those clashes, my side is showing faults on purpose.

Although I fall behind in terms of speed, I am leading in terms of reach. At first glance, we seem evenly matched, but actually it is because the opponent is holding himself right at the point where I still have my superiority. That guy should have a skill he’s concealing with magic that gives him a ridiculous attack range extension.

From his expression, it is obvious that my opponent is just playing with me.

“GuuRUa!”

I make a big swing with my shoulder. Because that guy suddenly jumped to my side, I missed my attack and got my claw stuck in the ground. That guy loosens his expression. If I want to do it, it will be now.

“Gaa!”

I put my all in the other hand to attack.

“Na.....”

To defend my attack, his huge movement is too slow. It is in.

That guy, receiving one hit should be able to put him into distress. The fight with Adofu too, when it looked like he himself would receive an attack, he was trying to end the fight quickly. If this hit did not inflict a mortal wound, the seed of hope of winning will collapse.

My claw crushed the shadow of that guy. I cannot feel anything in my hand. This feeling, it is similar to when I hit [Mirage]. Certainly this guy, possessed a [Mirage]-like skill?

“I should make you a little more obedient. Don’t worry, because I will control my power”

I hear his voice and raise my eyes.

“[Skyfall]”

At the same time as his voice continues, there’s an intense impact on my head and I’m knocked down on the spot.

“Guaa!”

My head is slammed to the ground and I hit my chin. My field of vision shook greatly. I was hit directly on the center of the head. My consciousness is in a critical state.

[resistance skill [Paralysis Resistance] has increased from LV 2 to LV 3]

Even if God’s Voice indiscriminately tells me that, I cannot afford to be pleased. That guy climbs onto my head and thrusts his sword. If this continues, I will be killed.

“GuuuU……”

“You don’t have to groan. I have a little interest in you. Do you understand my words?”

That guy said that with a smile and sheaths his sword. He starts clapping his hand with the sound ‘pachi, pachi’.

What is with this guy, he really is something.

“Iya, I never thought such a sentimental dragon existed! I’m very touched”

He says, in a suspiciously sweet-talking voice, with his fingers on the bridge of his nose.

A very pretentious act. If he plans to kill me, I do not think he will put up such a farce. Anyway, do you mean you do not want to kill me right now?

“But still, I can’t believe it. No, no no, I understand that this is rude, but I am a doubtful person. Which is why I want to see you putting your life on the line even more”

From his tone and expression, I do not think he is being honest. He’s speaking indirectly, but in short, what is this guy trying to say?

This guy bends his body forward and looks into my eyes.

“5 days..... No, it’s better if it is earlier. 4 days, yes, that is just nice. After 4 days, straight North from here, there is a country where I was born. Can you come 4 days later in the afternoon? From here it will take 2 days to arrive if you hurry.”

While saying that, that guy points to the direction I came. Ahead of that, there is the aforementioned city with a castle wall.

No, no way, are you telling me to go there? There will be a huge panic if I enter the city.

I already thought he was the kind of guy where you can never tell what he’s thinking, but no matter how I look at it, I can’t figure out what he means. Did you not attack me with the intention to prevent me from getting near to that city with the castle walls? The things you say and the things you do are all mixed up.

“GUuOOOO!”

As if I could do that?! Who the hell would go!

Mustering up all the strength I have left, I wave my claw towards the guy on my head.

“Well then, I will be waiting. Irushia-kun, please do not betray my expectations.”

That guy raises his sword in its scabbard and drives it into my head. My claw did not make it in time at all. I received an intense blow in my head again, and my consciousness was cut off.

Chapter 167

Prisoner of War

My eyes open. My consciousness is still dim. At first it is blurry, but my eyes gradually focus. It seems I have hardly moved from where I was before I lost consciousness.

When I think that this landscape looks unfamiliar, my line of sight lowers. My cheeks are lodged firmly in the ground.

I stretch my neck and raise my body while spitting out the sand in my mouth. Bleh, bleh. How did so much sand enter my mouth? Come to think of it, inside my dream, I think I was biting onto the back of a dark worm the size of a mountain. It tasted weird, I never thought that there will be a day where I would taste sand. Freud, please diagnose my dream.

My head has calmed down after spitting out the sand.

I'm sure I was hit in the head by the guy with golden hair..... But, I'm still alive? Am I being overlooked? Wait, but if that is so, then why?

Oh right, Nina! Where is Nina!? When I thought about Nina, blood rushed to my head. The block in my thoughts cleared up. Even if Nina was overlooked, due to the effects of [Dragon Scale], there is a possibility she is already dead.

“GuoooooOO!”

I look around as I roar.

[DON'T MOVE]

Coming from behind me, was a [Telepathy] message full of hostility. I stop my movements. A [Telepathy] message received at this timing, I doubt that it is anyone else other than the ball rabbit. But, there is hostility in that [Telepathy].

After I stop moving, I slowly look behind me.

I meet eyes with Adofu, sitting cross legged on the ground with a complicated expression.

The ball rabbit is right behind Adofu. The ball rabbit has both of its ears constricted around Adofu's neck. The ball rabbit seems to be serious, but the overall figure still looks silly to me.

The ball rabbit is glaring firmly. It is the first time that I have seen it this angry. My eyes and the ball rabbit's eyes meet and somehow its glare softens.

It seems like the [DON'T MOVE] from just now was directed at Adofu. Since Adofu was weakened from being stabbed in the back by the mysterious guy who had the same name as me, I thought that he had died after that. The wounds on Adofu's body seem to have covered up. Did the ball rabbit treat him?

"Pefu"

[Eyes, finally opened]

Ball rabbit sighs in relief.

Anyway, it is good to know that the ball rabbit is fine. But, I still do not see Nina around. Is Nina... is Nina ok?

[.....That guy, took her away]

.....I knew it, so it became that way. For some reason, I knew that it would become like that.

The last thing that that guy mentioned was about an invitation to the city. That is the reason he didn't finish me off. In order to lure me to the city, Nina was kidnapped as a hostage.

It's a complicated feeling. I was suddenly attacked and seriously injured, and Nina was even kidnapped, yet her life will be prolonged because of that. From the few exchanges in our conversation, it was easy to figure out that he is a total bastard, even though going to Haranae wasn't what Nina wanted...

Because Nina is separated from me, her curse should weaken. If it is that person, there is also no need to worry about being defeated by monsters along the way. That person

seems capable enough to handle it even if he was faced with two huge giant centipedes.

And then, well..... Adofu is.....

“Pefu”

[Capture, done]

O, ou.....

[He was about to die soon. So he wouldn't notice, I treated him from underground]

Thinking that Adofu would not be able to see you, you treated him from underground, right.....? Ball rabbit, at times like this, you are really clever. Perhaps it is more clever than me?

It is true that Adofu can be useful in sorting out this situation. We can get all kinds of information regarding that mysterious guy and Haranae from him too. He seems strong-willed, but he had a falling out with his comrade. Even if we do not threaten him, there is a high chance that he will tell us the truth.

For now, I should take a look at Adofu's status.

[Adolf • Ahren]

Race : Earth • Huma

Status: Prisoner's mark, Poisoned (small), Cursed (small)

Paralysis (small), Lowered Senses (small)

LV : 48/85

HP : 57/316

MP : 34/98

How did this person get loaded down with so many abnormal status effects..... As someone who has experience in various battlefields, it is my first time seeing five status effects. Even in the past, I think the most I have seen is the poison spider which had three.

[Looked like would die from poison, so symptoms, lessened]

Ball rabbit, you are able to remove the poison? Perhaps it is an effect of [Clean] ? I thought for sure that that skill was only for cleaning.

[But, if he resisted, I couldn't hold him down, so a little was left]

.....A cunning move.

Certainly , even if Adofu was not in perfect form, it would be easy for him to shake ball rabbit off. An enemy of an enemy is not necessary an ally. If it is ball rabbit, with [Telepathy] it should be able to perform a simple mind reading, but even that skill is not flawless. Or possibly, it found hostility towards me inside Adofu? Anyhow, I do not understand what happened in their situation, so after he's cured, the chance of him going on a rampage is not zero. It is necessary to have insurance during the period when I had lost consciousness.

"Pefu"

At the same time as the ball rabbit cries, a blue light comes out from its body and envelopes Adofu. I understand immediately because I had seen it before. This is the skill, [Clean]. Looks like it's completely curing the poison. Because I had woken up, it's no longer necessary to have an insurance.

"Th, thanks"

Adofu turns his head around and gives his thanks to ball rabbit. It seems like he was worried about how to respond, but for now he is giving his thanks.

[Don't move, do not make me repeat]

Adofu lifted his head immediately. Like before, he is showing a complicated expression.

.....Anyway, I am awake now, can you unfasten your ears? For me, I can immediately capture Adofu alive in his current condition. For this reason, ball rabbit has already cured Adofu, yet for some reason stubbornly keeps the restrain around his neck.

Chapter 168

A Certain Brave Man's Story

First and foremost, I must listen to Adofu's circumstances. Although I had asked the ball rabbit to release Adofu multiple times, it still hasn't lessened its grip. Ah, I give up, let's just proceed like this. Thus, the quiet interrogation by the ball rabbit began.

"Pefu"

「Who are you?」

Adofu remained silent. I guess it won't be as easy to get information out of him as we thought, so the ball rabbit asks again.

「Speak in mind, I can hear」

It doesn't seem like Adofu was attempting to resist, but was probably trying to figure out how telepathy works. However, if he does so then I won't be able to hear it. I can always hear the story later from the ball rabbit, but there will likely be some discrepancies. Telling me at the same time will be a waste of time and MP after all.

The ball rabbit can use [Telepathy] as easily as it is able to use its mouth to talk. Has being the translator for the conversations so far made it a natural at it? Since it's like that, is it possible that [Telepathy] is even greater than being able to translate all languages?

Adofu who received the thoughts of the ball rabbit, looked at me surprised.

"You... you can understand my words?"

"Guru"

I nodded.

"...I am Adofu Ahrens. There was a report of a dangerous monster being sighted, so as I returned from my temporary release from prison, I was to go and subjugate that

monster... I am still a prisoner.”

Those last words sounded painful for him to say. I had thought that there was something strange going on. So he is a prisoner. Looking at this old man, it must be troublesome... That blond guy probably has something to do with it.

「Another question. Why were you two fighting?」

Adofu’s face tenses up. He bites his lips to suppress his anger as some blood begins to drip.

“I was deceived, I-I had put too much trust in that demon.”

He says so as he strikes the ground with his fist. Adofu proceeds to talk after that.

According to Adofu, apparently that man is considered a Brave man, a ‘Hero’.

My name, Irushia, originated from a flower, and I have certainly heard that one of the meanings of that flower can mean ‘Hero’. Although I have some objections, that name certainly has some connection with us.

Once every five hundred years, the king of monsters, known as the Demon King, gathers the monsters and threatens the world of Man, as told in stories from Haranae. Everytime the Demon King appears, a man with the power to defeat it appears in the Holy land of Haranae. Therefore, that man is considered a Brave man. The Hero is found by the church’s jewel, and then raised in the church from childhood to receive special training.

It’s a story that repeats every five hundred years. There seems to be few people who believe in such a story, but the church does indeed foster them to be heroes. It seems that the story up to there was fine, but the church who received these heroes quickly rose in power. As such, the amount of supplies coming from other countries increased.

The church which continued to receive support, quickly became corrupted. As the interests of the Hero were enforced, the church grew in size as the priests consolidated inside. Although the amount of supplies received should have enriched the land, the amount distributed to the people was meager.

It is said that growing up spoiled was a symbol of being a Hero. As Adofu realized the faults, he, as the Knight’s leader, tried to do something about it, but there were many

obstacles in the way which kept him from doing anything, ultimately leading to his current situation of bearing a deep-seated grudge.

After some time, it was decided that a mock duel was to be held between him and that man in front of a crowd. This was four years ago, and at that time Adofu had won. After the duel, the Hero followed the legends and traveled with several female attendants. It seems he came back about a year ago, with all the attendants having either died, married off somewhere or run away, unable to bear the journey, or so it was told by Irushia.

Regarding the circumstances surrounding Adofu, it appears that he was told by the priest not to face off against the Hero, "At that time, nobody doubted him, but thinking about it now, all those who ventured with him were probably killed." When they were chosen by the Hero, the women had all been pleased. It also seems that a popular daughter from the city of Haranae was also chosen, and she left while receiving the blessings of many acquaintances.

The Hero steadily grew in fame wherever he went and was greeted with cheers when he came back. When Adofu had believed that the man had changed after traveling around the world, an incident had occurred where Adofu's brother and fiancée were killed. Adofu had called for the improvement of regulations by the church at the time. Unfortunately, the church did not investigate the matters concerning the deaths, as it was tailored for Adofu to take the fall. So he was imprisoned on false charges.

While he was in prison, the Hero came to visit. It seems that he wanted to reunite with him after four years. As Adofu had suffered, the Hero had talked to him as a friend and had promised to ask the church to investigate into the matters more closely. Adofu had thought that he was much different from how he was four years ago and therefore had trusted his words. Although the price of such a promise was that he would go out to subjugate a plague dragon, he had already been betrayed from the start and thus that fight occurred.

Also, once the hero returns to Haranae, Adofu will be treated as an escaped prisoner, inciting the church to hang all his relatives. It's a terrible story. While listening, I stomped on the ground and growled in anger.

Although the content seems a bit outrageous, it doesn't seem like it's a lie. Also, with how long they were talking, if any of it were a lie then it would have been picked up by [Telepathy].

By the way, Adofu doesn't know why the Hero wanted to take advantage of me. If the dragon were to wreak havoc in the city, then it would be the Hero's name which would lose reputation. That's something to think about, but it may also be a cruel act.

I wonder what will happen to Nina in Haranae. That man is in a place where he is regarded as a hero so he likely won't be killed. Also, who would suspect him of murder? It's something he had secretly handled and disposed of.

I have to go and save Nina somehow, but that man definitely has a plan. He said to come at noon in four days time. That time frame is certainly suspicious.

It is dangerous to obediently venture to Haranae, as I can't grasp what the other side's intentions are. It's funny when I think back to the time when I had wanted to travel there in the beginning. There are probably more people there than in Miria's village. This will become quite a commotion.

Should I launch a surprise attack and get there early by using [Roll]? Or should I attack from outside until they bring out Nina? That Brave man said that it took two days to get to Haranae from here, but maybe with [Roll] I'll be able to get there in half a day.

He had seen my status, but he probably hadn't noticed the usefulness of the skill since I hadn't use it front of him. A surprise attack is possible but I'm not too sure about it. Whether I can bring Nina out of there alive or not is questionable.

However, to begin with, there is hardly any chance for me to win, even if I use [Roll] to run away. It would be good to raise my level, even a little bit, to slightly raise my chances of winning before going to the city.

I also want to help Adofu's relatives if possible, but it will be difficult to do. Just getting Nina and escaping is already hard enough. Even if I can defeat the Brave man, there's a chance that Adofu's relatives are already done for.

It is necessary to not only to deal with the Brave man but to also ruin his reputation. Such a feat won't be easy though, as long as the story is heard by the church then they will stop the rumors. No matter who I talk to, there won't be much help.

No, that Brave man is convinced that Adofu is dead. Is there a possibility to lower that man's reputation so far that even the church can't overcome it by using Adofu? If the timing is off then it will only be a death sentence, but if the cards are played right, then it could be our trump card.

「What do you think, of these four days」

The ball rabbit asks Adofu for his opinion while its ears still wrapped around him. Ball rabbit, think it over, as far as I've heard, that old man's completely a victim in this.

“...F-four days!”

“Pefu!!”

The ball rabbit holds Adofu down as he's about to get up. Adofu lowers his head and sits back down.

“Guuoo?”

What's happening in four days?

「what's going on, in four days?」

The ball rabbit translates it this time. Although the words sound a little arrogant, it can't be helped.

...You didn't do it on purpose, did you?

“Ah, I'm sorry. That pegasus of his can reach home in one day. If Irushia were to quickly prepare the church... then maybe, my relatives would receive capital punishment in four days, or maybe five, so I got a little carried away.”

In four or five days? Didn't that man say such a thing as well?

“Five days..... No, it's better if it is earlier. Four days, yes, that is just nice. After four days, straight North from here, there is the country where I was born. Can you come four days later in the afternoon? From here it will take two days to arrive if you hurry.”

He's even thought of the possibility of the date being delayed. Does this, by any chance... No, it can't be, that guy.....

“Maybe Irushia... is going to keep the church from executing that slave girl for that long, since in Haranae, discrimination against beastmen is deeply-rooted, it's not an impossible guess.”

As Adofu says that, he drops his gaze to escape my line of sight.

Chapter 169

Resolution

No way, did that man really have a way to kill in such a dignified manner? In four days, Nina will be executed. If that possibility exists, then we can't afford to wait for the brave man to come out.

I only have to make it into the city. Ahh! I have to quickly get into the city. I can't understand what that man was thinking of while coming up with this.

It's not necessary to arrive in four days as instructed. Rather, that man could shift the dates so that I'm completely unprepared by the time I get there.

That's what I thought, but Adofu had a different opinion. As he told his thoughts to the ball rabbit, I shook my head and cast my head down.

"...Even if you want to recover a hostage, you still need to get into the city in the day of the execution, and immediately go in at the right time of their execution. Important criminals are put in the underground prison. There is no room for dragons to enter."

I can't help but be convinced when you say it like that. It might be possible to destroy the facilities and kick around soldiers but there will be mass casualties from that.

I absolutely don't want to do such a thing, I can already imagine the types of titles I would receive from it. Also depending on the structure of the facility, there is a possibility that Nina will be buried alive if it collapses.

But entering Haranae on the day of the execution is also dangerous on its own.

Capital punishment in Haranae is a public execution in the central square. Since it's out in the open, there's is a possibility to retrieve Nina by quickly going in, but the problem lies with all the people who would be watching. According to Adofu, the number of adults, a large percentage of Haranae's population, will come see the executions.

I don't know the brave man's final aim, but the purpose of him leaving me alive and

inviting me by capturing Nina is to get me in a place with lots of people. I guess it would be better for him if he has lots of people there at the time, and Adofu even said that he could have people gather just by using his name.

Even if it was a small village, I managed to cause a large commotion back in the forest.

This time, it will take place in a large square with many present. I don't know what will happen at such an event. Troops from all over the country will come together at once, people who are trying to escape from me will be pushing, and unfortunate children will die.

Why would he do such a thing, even though he is called a hero?

If I move as expected, then that man will come and pick me off fully prepared. I wanted to go in and out without fighting, but it doesn't look like I'll be able to. I need to figure out a way to break through somehow. But that's the hard part.

After rescuing Nina, I have to somehow manage to shake off that hero.

It's impossible to beat that hero in my current state. His stats all exceed mine, and he has a wide variety of cheats and skills with high attack power. He didn't even use all of his skills to catch me and to think he still has more. It's also nerve-racking that Adofu received so many status abnormalities just from being stabbed with a sword.

Getting away is impossible.

He has a horse that can fly, along with his high-speed stats and magic to improve his physical ability. He'll catch up even if I use [Roll] to run away. Also, if I use [Roll] in the city, I don't know how many buildings will be destroyed in the process. That tsukkomi [God's Voice] will certainly be the first to say something such as with the titles [Calamity] and [Path of Evil].

I can't defeat him as I am now, so I have to get stronger in the next four days. I need to boost my level before the execution deadline and raise my stats until I can fight equally with that hero.

Once the hero is taken care of, if I can, I will clear up the false charges on Adofu, and leave Haranae with Nina.

That's the best solution.

If I can't do that in time, then I will evolve into a speed specialized dragon, that way I can escape with Nina. I can also make do with being able to deliver punishing blows. That slime I fought in the forest, had said something about 'not in the habit of fighting lower ranked opponents.' If the hero thinks that he can easily overlook me, then Adofu's relatives... would be killed.

Even if I think of all that, if I'm not able to raise my stats then I won't even be able to escape. So how's my level currently look?

[Irushia]
Race: Evil Plague Dragon
State: Normal
Lv: 44/75
HP: 157/343
MP: 199/236

I still need 31 levels until the next evolution...?

The higher the level the more difficult it gets. This is a rule of thumb, although not always the case. I wonder if I can bring my level up to max in the next four days.

I need to keep pushing until I'm sure I can somehow overcome the danger.

Fortunately, I had already obtained [Auto HP Recovery]. I should be able to start fighting from today. I'll focus on levelling up today, tomorrow and the day after that, and on the morning of the fourth day, use [Roll] to head over to Haranae.

This will be considerably dangerous...

I'm a B ranked monster already. I'm not entirely sure what that means but it shouldn't be that weak. Being able to make a group of warriors turn back and neutralize Adofu without killing him, should land me in a fairly strong category. Most of the monsters that I can encounter here can be easily defeated by me and turned into food.

The opponent who can raise my level by several times... would it be the giant centipede or the red ants? The last time I saw the giant centipede it was being attacked by red ants so I'm unsure if it's still alive or not.

If I will take them on then I might get overwhelmed. But there's no other choice. I have grown this much, if I want to grow even further I must be willing to take on the dangers that come with it, or I won't be able to raise my level.

Chapter 170

The Third Meeting

I scan my surroundings for my prey as I walk through the desert. I thought it would be easy at first, but it turns out that wasn't the case. I try to remember the location of the ant's nest as I move along, but at this rate, I'll be lucky if I'm able to find it.

I should keep moving. I'll fly again and look around.

"Guua!"

After yelling, I stop and look behind me. The ball rabbit's ears are gripping onto my tail. Ah, I forgot that ball rabbit and Adofu are on my back. I slowly lower my tail to the ground to let the ball rabbit and Adofu get down.

"Pefu..."

「Are you really, going to fight?」

Yes.

In order to gain experience quickly, I have to do this. I'm doubtful of whether I even have a chance of succeeding, but I have to at least try. If I can't at least knock him down then I have no chance against that hero (monster).

But I have to at least buy some time for the ball rabbit to escape once the time comes.

"Pefu....."

「But.....」

...I don't want to say it, but he's not an opponent that I can win against. Even more so if I have to watch out for the ball rabbit. It would just cause me worry when I'm fighting.

"Pefuu..."

It doesn't seem like it's entirely convinced, but it has accepted it for now.

Adofu also has the ability to defeat C rank monsters. It doesn't seem like he's paying much attention to the conversation though. He's probably thinking about the coming fight. I should ask him later if he would be willing to escort the ball rabbit.

Although I know his thoughts are elsewhere, I should still ask him since he still needs to borrow my help to save his relatives. Cooperating to level up would be more efficient.

Looking at the state Afodu is in, it's apparent that he's fighting his own demons, and it's a heavy battle by the looks of it. I guess that kind of thing isn't limited to certain races.

If possible, I would like to evolve into a gentle dragon of some kind, but now... I can't afford to be picky here... A strong and ferocious dragon will have to do right now.

Since I have acquired [Rest], it's possible for me to become some kind of divine dragon along the road, but it will be impossible now.

"Since a while ago, what have you been looking for?"

Adofu who was ahead of me because he was being hurried by the ball rabbit looked back at me and said so.

"Pefu"

「Large centipede」

The ball rabbit who read my thoughts said to Adofu. Adofu's mouth dropped as he stops walking. But he's pushed along by the ball rabbit.

It is a silly reaction, but it's understandable. If I was told yesterday that I would be fighting that "large centipede" again I would have given a similar reaction. Since Adofu is from Haranae, he should know how fearsome that large centipede is.

"Guuoo!"

I kick off the ground and fly up. Spreading my wings, I open my eyes against the headwind to scan the area.

Sand, Sand and more sand in all directions.

I do see a beautiful lake in the distance. However, I won't be fooled again.

Although we do have ball rabbit who's capable of using [Clean] on the lake, he will be too exhausted to use [Telepathy]. There is still much to be said to Adofu so I'd rather not waste energy on something unnecessary for the time being. The ball rabbit is all-purpose but there isn't enough MP to go around.

After reaching the highest point I could, I bent my neck to look around. I could see the ground moving a little in the distance.

What is that? I'm getting a bad feeling. A giant monster the same color as the desert sand is moving about. So it finally came out.

Race: Giant Sand Centipede

State: Normal

Lv: 64/80

HP: 463/463

MP: 244/244

Atk: 332

Def: 301

Mana: 201

Spd: 242

Rank: B

Characteristic Skills:

[Myriapod: Lv-] [King's Shell: Lv6] [Earth Attribute: Lv-]

[Auto-HP Recovery: Lv5] [Presence Sense: Lv4]

Resistance Skills:

[Physical Resistance: Lv6] [Magic Resistance: Lv2] [Fall Resistance: Lv4]

[Poison Resistance: Lv6] [Paralysis Resistance: Lv2] [Confusion Resistance: Lv2]

[Drowsiness Resistance: Lv3]

Normal Skills:

[Poison: Lv5] [Dig: Lv6] [Sand Breath: Lv4]

[Clay Wall: Lv3] [Paralysis Bite: Lv2] [Acid Spit: Lv4]

[Heat Ray: Lv4]

Title Skills:

[King Centipede: Lv-] [Lord of the Desert: Lv6] [Determination: Lv4]

[Tenacity: Lv7] [Chaser: Lv6] [Final Evolution: Lv-]

This guy, doesn't his level increase everytime I see him? There's the possibility of it being a different one, but it smells like the same guy. Well, even if there are many like it, I'm still in trouble.

So it was still alive after all. Seems like it escaped after I ran away.

Legs that were supposed to have been eaten are fully grown back. It's back to its usual shape. This thing is a walking disaster, but it's not much of a mystery why when considering its titles.

Did the large centipede notice me? It lifted its head.

Ah, our eyes met.

The large centipede opens its large mouth and rattles its teeth.

Oh, seems like it's fairly agitated.

It's close enough that I can hear that unpleasant "gijijijijijiji" noise it makes.

That time where you got your head stuck in the ant hole is entirely your own fault. I did nothing wrong at all. I... you have no reason to get mad at me.

I won't be able to move freely in the air if that centipede uses its beam, so I quickly descend towards the ground and land. It was a fast landing so the sand scattered a little.

"Gua!"

I turn my head towards the direction of the large centipede and point with my chin.

The large centipede still seems to remember me. I guess it holds strong grudges. Humans are its favorite dish, but it looks like I'm his top priority. If I have the ball

rabbit and Adofu go in a separate direction, it's unlikely he will chase them.

The ball rabbit nods and heads in the opposite direction while pulling Adofu with its ears.

...Will one person be enough to keep them safe? I'm getting increasingly anxious the more I watch.

Well, I should worry about myself first.

I rush in the opposite direction from where the other two are heading so that the large centipede will follow after me.

Since there's a big hill up ahead, I could hide there if there's enough distance between us. If it can't pinpoint my location then it can't hit me with its heat ray. I don't actually have to watch from this far, but the range on that beam is strange. If that centipede could fly then I'm sure it would be possible for its ray to hit a target as far as one kilometer away.

Chapter 171

Maximum Power

I traverse the desert using [Roll] while feeling an intense pressure from behind. I should've made enough distance from Adofu and the ball rabbit by now.

I'll head to the seaside while slowing down a little to attract the centipede in my direction.

"gijijijijijijijijiji!"

...That guy really is out of the standard. Since I am several steps behind the hero in terms of stats and skills I was willing to try to defeat this guy. But... I guess that thought was a little rash.

Mah, now I'm sounding timid.

Even I was almost killed and eaten twice by that centipede. I know just how out of the standard that centipede is.

I've been associated with this centipede ever since I got to this desert. So much that I can almost predict its attack patterns. Well, not entirely but close enough.

When I first saw this monster in the distance I never thought that I would face it several times, but it ends today.

There are three main obstacles I have to consider when facing the Giant Centipede. The first, is the high defensive ability that is brought on by the centipede's characteristic skill [King's Shell]. Then there is the high offensive power originating from its stats. Which leads me to the next and most problematic thing, the [Heat Ray] which boasts high offensive power and range, so I've chosen to call it "Centipede Beam".

I have to come up with a way to overcome these three obstacles if I want to end the Giant Centipede. I was able to come up with countermeasures to all three, but whether they work or not won't become apparent until we begin the fight.

Now that he's in front of me I regret that I had thought it would be easier. The simulations I'd ran in my head are different from the real thing. I last saw it when it had been attacked by the red ants, so my fear of the centipede had somewhat diminished.

I take a glimpse back.

"Gijijijijijijijijijijii!"

I could see the Giant Centipede's face rushing towards me while scattering sand around. It's closer than I thought.

It would be unreasonable to look surprised at this point, but it still makes me uneasy. It's impossible to win with my eyes closed, so I have to somehow get used to this feeling. I have to keep this fight within a short distance or risk maneuvering through the centipede's beam. I have to get my nerves in order and carefully watch its movements.

Should I find a place with all the right conditions then fight back? Haa, Maybe I should just stop procrastinating.....

The last match will start soon.

I could see a big rock in the distance. Okay, let's go with there.

It would be a good starting point. Its sturdy and I can move it at the last-minute if I need too. I'm still anxious, but a rock like that at this time will be hard to come by. If I miss this chance, then I may fall behind in this fight.

I will lift the rock high in the sky and smash it into the large centipedes head using [Nutcracker]. It has the highest attack power among all of my skills. If this doesn't work then the rest of my skills will not be able to damage its shell.

Don't get cold feet now. Pay attention to the enemy's movements. If I make a mistake then I'm dead.

I jump up with the rock I am going to use to smash against the large centipede who's rushing at me. It's still doubtful whether I can do it before the centipede uses its beam. It takes more mana than I expect since the rock I choose is a little big. No, thinking of that guys defensive capabilities, I should not be stingy about this.

I put a lot of strength into pulling and flying when I feel a huge force weighing down on my body. I feel a slight impact as it hits me from pulling too hard and my head is rattled.

Even so, I turn myself around and kick off the ground before jumping away and somehow managing to fly.

This height... is this my limit? Can't I go any higher, If I push too hard I'll just become prey to the Centipede Beam.

I look and check for the position of the large centipede. The centipede stops moving when it's almost right under me and lifts its face. It's convenient to aim at your head if you do that. This way I can crush down on your weak point and shatter it.

I stop moving in the air, turn the rock downwards, tilt my body and aim at the large centipede's head.

The large centipede is opening its mouth up wide while looking up at me. Red light started gathering in its mouth. There is no doubt, this is the preparation for the Centipede Beam. If it were to use [Sandbreath] or [Paralysis Bite] then it would have been a bad matchup for this rock... but thankfully it's using the beam.

"Guuooooooooooooo!"

"Gijijijijijijijijijiiiiii!"

While roaring, I push my wings back to increase my speed a little more.

Make it in time, please make it in time.

I'm sorry but I don't want to fall prey to the centipede's beam this time.

The moment I am about to smash the rock over the large centipede's face, the violent mouth of the centipede opens wider and the red light spreads out with it.

I didn't make it in time. That's what my instinct tells me.

"Gurua!"

I kick off the rock and fly to the side.

The rock stops moving just before the large centipede's face. The next moment, a straight red line grows from the rock and then the rock bursts open.

I succeed in landing on my feet somehow by shifting my altitude with my wings and using my tail as a brake. Damn! I was just about to smash his head to the ground.

"Gijiaaaa!"

The large centipede shakes his head and pieces of rock fall from its face.

Race: Giant Sand Centipede
State: Normal
Lv: 64/80
HP: 459/463
MP: 211/244

Fuck! there is barely any damage.

Most of the momentum was killed. It will restore easily with just that amount of damage with its [Auto HP Recovery]. It's good that I didn't receive any kind of damage from that, but the situation also doesn't look too good.

Chapter 172

Head On Encounter

“Kichichichichiin!”

After I adjust my posture, I approach the giant centipede.

In the event that I fail, there is one thing that I can do. I concentrate magic in my throat, target the giant centipede and shoot everything out at once.

“GUUOOOO!”

The stagnant miasma breath assaults the giant centipede. It's [Plague Breath]. It will take time for its effects to truly appear, so I can't rely on that, but it does act as a smokescreen.

I think I'd go crazy if my skill level increased and I evolved, so I want to use [Scorching Breath], but it's visible to the enemy. In fact, I've experienced enemies charging through without hesitation despite me using [Scorching Breath] to slow them down.

For the giant centipede, a breath-like attack will not be able to penetrate its shell, with [Scorching Breath], the chances of defeating it will be slim. To begin with, my objective isn't to deal damage, so it's possible that it would think that this is strange and would slow down its movements by a few seconds.

Besides, it doesn't seem to be that easy to raise the skill level.

[Normal Skill [Plague Breath] has leveled up from 3 to 4]

.....as expected from God's Voice-san, you really did it. Your voice came, right at the moment I show an opening, I really felt that stab coming at me. I really dislike this. Maybe it's just telling me to give me an update.

I fly upwards from within the miasma. I kick the centipede's head, spread my wings, and ride the wind to gain some distance. Turning my back on the centipede that has shown itself by cutting through the miasma, I then used [Roll] to run away.

The attempt to use the plan 'KO with [Nutcracker]' has failed. From now on its response will be faster. To begin with, if he gets some distance the moment I'm in the air and then waits for me to land, it's over. This technique is applicable provided that the giant centipede charges at me, sort of like, a counter when at a disadvantage. It relies on the opponent's actions. My strategy to use [Nutcracker] on the giant centipede cannot be used anymore.

When it comes to this, there is no other option but to use other strategies. I still have another method for this. This is also a counter which relies on the giant centipede's actions, though compared to the strategy for [Nutcracker] it has a lot of uncertainties, and it also possesses a high risk if it fails, but this is the only method left.

When I need to prioritise escaping, speed and attack strength will become a problem. During that time, the important thing is how fast I can move. However, when my objective is to defeat it, defense will become a problem. The important thing is, can I smash that giant centipede's shell? Naturally, my options are limited.

If I am able to smash that shell and am left with no other methods to attack anymore, when that time comes, there is no need to think about what to do. If this fails, I might die. It's possible to get killed. This time for sure, I will be able to remove that centipede.

"KICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHII!"

The giant centipede releases an unpleasant noise. "Coward, come here and face me in battle", is the feeling I'm getting.

Of course, to face it up front and fight it fair and square is something I would decline doing. If that happened I would definitely lose. Why do I have to agree to a fight where the opponent has the advantage?

But, because I'm getting tired or due to the giant centipede becoming enraged, the distance between us did not increase at all. Rather, the distance is rapidly becoming narrower and narrower. I cannot hold this for long. [Plague Breath] was supposed to have been completely absorbed, and I considered that [Curse] might start taking effect and that the centipede might weaken if I started an endurance race and ran away for a whole day, but it doesn't seem like I could do that.

If the chase is prolonged, I will be struck by the centipede beam again. Whether I can dodge that, it is a game with quite bad luck.

On the far right, a big hill can be seen. It fits the assumed conditions. Right, here I go, this time I will fight back.

I intend to use up my physical strength and raise the speed of [Roll] all at once. A prolonged escape is not necessary. Here, I have reached the desired distance.

“GUUOOOOO!”

I safely crossed the top of the targeted hill. Right, from this temporary strategic position, I should be able to hide myself from the giant centipede.

I slowly decelerate and make a fast turn. I rush up the descending slope all at once. From the direction where I escape to, turning towards the direction of frontal collision.

With this timing, the collision with the giant centipede should happen at the top of the hill. It'll depend on my opponent's actions, but it doesn't mean that there is no chance to win. No, other than this method, I can't think of any other way to break through that giant centipede.

That is why, I have to do it.

The melee skill of that giant centipede has 2 flaws. First of all, the giant centipede's melee ability has an unexpectedly big gap. I was afraid when I met it the first time and could hardly notice it. Its motion is quite big. At most, that part of the movement is fast..... even so, if you watch it carefully, you should be able to avoid the first hit.

From there, there is a second flaw. Because, even when the giant centipede has that huge body, its attack pattern is mainly focused around its skills.

Normal skill:

[Poison LV5] [Dig LV6] [Sand Breath LV4]
[Clay Wall LV3] [Paralysis Bite LV2] [Acid Spit LV4]
[Heat Ray LV4]

Spitting poison, breathing out a sandstorm, spitting acid saliva, a bite attack enhanced with paralysis, and attacking with a charged-up mouth beam. I see, this guy can only do decent attacks with the mouth. Even if it has such a huge body. For everything else, the skill to dig and the skill to create a sand wall are creation magic.

This stupid giant centipede doesn't have a skill for his main body. If it wanted to utilise its body, at best, it can only use the hardness of the shell and move at a high speed to bash you with its body.

Even so, it is still a threat. The frightening part of the giant centipede is that it is able to fire danger from its mouth, it is much worse than the skill. In truth, it seemed almost helpless against the red ants that had flocked from the side.

So, this should work. When we collide at the top of the hill, I will provoke the giant centipede while dodging its one-hit attack.

If it's a normal collision, I'll be easily caught and will end up in its mouth, but the giant centipede still hasn't realised that I am going the other way around.

Facing against me who jumped out in a hurry, its reaction should be delayed a little. In the exchange of life, that "little" is a critical thing. The lethality of the skill used will also increase. Because of the surprise attack, I have a good chance of dodging the giant centipede's attack.

If I can get over its head, I can go around to the main body which has less capability to fight back. Starting from there it will be a critical period.

Chapter 173

Giant Centipede

I speed up to regain some of the momentum lost from when I went the other way.

“GICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHIIII !”

As the giant centipede climbs up the hill, an unpleasant sound can be heard as it comes nearer.

Immediately, the huge head of the giant centipede can be seen. The me who, until just now, was always running away suddenly showed up here. The giant centipede is surprised and stops immediately.

Here it is, this is the gap that I was waiting for to attack. I smack the top of the hill with my tail and launch myself into the air to cancel [Roll]. Then I extend my wings to fly up in the air.

Together with the giant centipede, our eyes meet at the same height. Indeed, when looking from such a close distance, its presence is much more overwhelming. Eei, scary, I’m scared!

“GUooooOOO!”

“GICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHIIII !”

Because I am flying, I fire off [Kamaitachi] towards the giant centipede’s eye. If it is the eye, I think I can damage it. It seems unlikely to be able to withstand this. I would appreciate it even if it just temporarily weakens its eyesight.

I fly in a path passing right by the giant centipede’s head.

I want to create a little more distance, but even if I fly about, I’ll fall prey to the centipede’s beam. Also, taking my next strategy into consideration, I’d like to prevail somehow with this relative position.^[1]

The giant centipede opens its jaw to the left and right and heads towards me to bite me. Uge, scaryyy.

However, even if it is [Paralysis Bite], it has already been taken into consideration in my plan. This is a skill that is very easy to handle. When compared to a breath attack, it has no reach. Its power is unmistakably strong, receiving one blow would remove a person from battle.

It seems like the giant centipede wants to end this with a powerful attack rather than to land an easy hit. It seems to hold an intense grudge. This amount of resentment is just right, it will be easier for me to provoke it.

The giant centipede is eyeing me. Following my movements, it raises its head accordingly. As expected, its movement is fast. It is impossible to evade it using normal means.

I will handle it skillfully, if I make a mistake it will be instant death. I have simulated this scenario multiple times. If I can keep up in this state, how should I move around to the enemy's tail? Following that path seems to be good.

Its jaws approach me. As I fend off its jaws with my wing, I use my tail, with my wing in between, to strike its jaws with all my might and propel myself forward using my wings.

“GUuuU.....”

Pain runs through my wings, but I was able to escape from its jaws. I did not go up, but instead head around towards the tail of the giant centipede.

I have to withstand the pain, if I fall down here and stray from my plan, everything will be lost. I cannot be seen as weak now, rather, I have to look like I am calm and composed.

Taking a glimpse behind me, the giant centipede is already twisting its body towards me. In my plan, this is where I let the giant centipede use [Heat Ray] to pursue me, but my provocation was not successful. When I passed by just now, I was planning to attack it. However, it deviates from the plan, I cannot afford more than what was expected.

The centipede beam seems to consume a great deal of MP. All of this depends on that

guy's mood. Damn it, I know that this situation is bad, but, as expected, it is impossible. But there is no other option than this.

This plan is crazy. Compared to the original plan, the chances of winning are like a thin thread. Although that is the only thing that I have been doing until now, there is no choice but to escape.

At least now, even in this situation things would have been different if I had a skill that can provoke the giant centipede..... but I guess it's impossible. That guy's shell is too abnormal. Just a little poke is not enough, even if you hit its face with [Kamaitachi] there will be no reaction.

No..... something, I feel like I am getting something. First of all, the damage will not go through right? Perhaps I can use a skill which can do something to instigate it.

There's only one, a skill that I never used before, [Whistle]. Somehow I instinctively know how to use it. First I narrow my lips, then follow through with magic power and blow out lightly. The keypoint is, to whistle. I never thought that this skill will have such a special use. I tried not to use it in the forest because it would have been troublesome if it had attracted monsters due to it making a loud noise.

If that is the case, I should be able to draw the attention of the giant centipede. This is the last bet. With this, I'll taunt the giant centipede to use [Heat Ray].

I turn my head behind to stare at the giant centipede's face and use [Whistle].

$$P_{yu} \sim P_{ii}$$

Although there is a pause in between, it is loud enough to surprise others. Oioi, this, this won't attract weird monsters, right? Maa, in this desert there is no one more dangerous than the giant centipede.

"GICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHIII!"

The giant centipede heaves its head up and starts to accumulate red light in its mouth. Yes, it is finally coming! Somehow I have smoothly achieved my goal!

O~ O~ it is getting angry, it's getting angry. Ma, this is it, it should be like this. Anyone would be angry if they were whistled at right after their attack was evaded. That would most likely include me too, I would chase them to the bottom of the cliff in a rage.

I rise in altitude and at the same time I slow down a little bit. I hang around the top of the giant centipede's tail.

The giant centipede catches sight of me with its eyes, and claps its jaw in excitement. It is coming, it is coming.

Immediately it fires the centipede beam. You will not make it in time if you try to evade it from the moment you see the beam. From the moment the giant centipede takes aim, you have to move away. It must be subconsciously evaded.

If it is this close in distance. It will be easy to cut off from the giant centipede's line of sight. It is not like the time when I was running away, this time I can fully focus on evading the centipede beam. Even if I am able to safely evade it, five seconds is my limit.

“GICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHICHII !”

I move my tail in the air to shift my centre of gravity, I use my wing and tilt my body to move towards the left. This way, I will have moved out of the line of sight of the giant centipede. Immediately to my right, the centipede beam is fired off.

I can feel an intense heat in my body. Even if it did not hit, this thing is already at the level of a biological weapon. To evade the centipede beam I fly to the right in a semicircular pattern. The centipede beam is following me.

Compared to a normal distance, it is easier to evade at a close distance. Nonetheless, with my strength, this is my limit for evading.

“GUuGAa !”

I breath out [Plague Breath] to cover my surroundings with a sinister miasma.^[2] Now the giant centipede has lost sight of me. However, something like this will clear up quickly.

I rapidly descend and land near the rear end of the giant centipede. I strike the tail of the giant centipede with both my claws, put my strength into my jaw and bite it. After bracing my legs on the ground, I kick off while smacking my tail on the ground.

“GUuo0000 !”

Making sure my wings are spread, I shoot [Kamaitachi] directly below me. The giant centipede's back lifts forcefully.

In the midst of the miasma, I can see the giant centipede. It is like a mass of light.

I lift the body of the large centipede over to the place where the centipede beam passes by.

As expected of the giant centipede. That centipede beam, if you take it on yourself, there will be nothing left. The shell that you are proud of will be shattered. After that, it will be sufficient to just attack the part where the shell has shattered.

With this, I finally can properly damage you. Finally, I can feel like we stand on the same level. From here onwards it seems like there will be a fierce battle.

Jutto' A short sound rang out. It seems like the body of the giant centipede is hit by the centipede beam.

"GICHIYAAAAAAAAAAAAAaaaaaaAaaaaaa!"

Together with the loud screech, the giant centipede's body moves greatly. Trashing heavily back and forth away from my mouth, my jaw seems to nearly fall off. It is a close call, my fangs which are holding on to it are almost pulled off. This giant centipede bastard is flailing all over the place. At this rate my entire head will be pummeled.

Because I cannot see due to the miasma in my surroundings, I am not sure what happened. In conclusion, I wonder how much damage the centipede beam had dealt to the giant centipede's body.

It seems like the giant centipede's tail has been thrown to the ground, I pull my fangs from the shell. I kick on the tail of the giant centipede to jump to the ground. Using my tail to reduce the impact and then following up with [Roll]. At the same time as my body involuntarily reacts to the skill, I run away to gain distance from the giant centipede.

Right after I left, the gigantic body of the centipede crumbles behind me.

"KICHIa, a aAaaaaa !!"

The giant centipede makes a scream-like sound. This time the sound is much louder. Well, but, that sound, isn't it far away?

Eh, wait a second? Is there something weird? What happened?

I raise my head to look for the head of the giant centipede. Towards the front where the dust has cleared, I can see the giant centipede with one third of its lower body now gone, rampaging around with an overturned body. Dark green body fluids flow out from the amputated area. A large number of legs are wriggling violently.

It's movements look painful and it seems to be suffering. It looks like a drowning person struggling to grab onto something. At this moment, the giant centipede's legs all look like the hands of a person. I shake my head to get rid of that creepy image.

Apparently, it seems that the centipede beam strategy has worked better than I had imagined. It did not just crush the shell, it cut its upper body and lower body into two. Just how much offensive power does it have? At the same time, I am really glad it did not hit me.

Chapter 174

The End of The Lord of the Desert

The lower half of the Giant Centipede, separated from the rest of its body, thrashes about uncontrollably. Body fluids gush out from the separated sections, as it squirms about randomly and hits the ground, gouging it out.

Come to think of it, Centipede, since your body structure is jointed, can you move around without a head? I expect that it will exhaust itself immediately.

I'd be an idiot to get too close and be caught up in such a thing and to die as a result. Let me get away quickly. The problem is not the rampaging body, but the remaining half with the head. It should have taken considerable damage, but that guy is still alive. I should quickly give it the finishing blow.

Race: Giant Sand Centipede
Status: Enraged (large), Bloodshed (large)
Lv : 64/80
HP : 132/463
MP : 142/244

Oou, it still has one third of its HP left? Is this how your regeneration works? Is it treating its blood loss? Well, anything is fine.

The Giant Centipede looks up while lying on its back, our eyes meet and it quickly flips its body over to prepare itself.

“GIJJIJJJJJJJJJJJJJJJJJJJJiiiiiii!”

It completely *snaps*. I am not referring to its body being cut into two, but it losing its

temper.

Again, red light gathers at the mouth of the Giant Centipede. It intends to quickly release another Centipede Beam.

I spread my wings and fly over the top of the Giant Centipede. It was easy to gauge, because of the accumulated beam in front of its mouth and because I have an understanding of how long it takes to charge the beam, that there is nothing to be wary of.

I immediately land on its back behind its head. From this position, the centipede shouldn't be able to hit me with the beam. The Giant Centipede shakes its head from side-to-side while firing the Centipede Beam, drawing a large line in the desert. Yosh yosh, use your MP in vain.

The Giant Centipede then starts twisting its body in an effort to force me off. I kick off from its shell and fly, landing on the ground and using [Roll] to dash through the desert.

I will run away for now. If I run around, I can expect it to K.O. from the blood loss. It seems a considerable amount of blood is going to its head, and there is no way to create any distance from the Giant Centipede.

“AAAIGIGIJJIIJJIIJJIIJJIIJJiiiiiii!”

The Giant Centipede is pursuing. It pushes its way through the sand, scattering body fluids in the desert while pursuing. However, compared to its considerable speed before it was severed in two, is its speed still dropping? If I seriously hurry right now, I could easily escape. Currently, I'm adjusting my speed as to not escape.

I periodically check behind me. Near the mouth of the Giant Centipede, red light is gathering again. Oi oi, the Centipede Beam fires too frequently, is its MP not completely exhausted? It's completely lost its composure.

I accelerate at once and turn left. I trace a circle on the ground, aiming for the back of the remaining half of the Giant Centipede. The Centipede Beam follows behind me, but

I pull away as soon as its angle nears me. Beyond that, it is necessary for it to twist its body a lot. It will not be as fast as turning its head to aim.

Aiming at the severed part, the place where there is no shell, I tackle it while maintaining [Roll].

“GIJlIiAa!”

Its flesh gouges, body fluids start gushing out with more force. It will be impossible with only a single shot, but if I keep on striking it with two or three more shots...

The Giant Centipede raises its speed to get away from me. Of course, I stick close behind and chase after it. It seems the roles of the hunter and the hunted have suddenly been reversed, Giant Centipede.

Its speed continues to consistently drop. It's inevitable now, Giant Centipede. Even though there should be a status abnormality, its HP is not going to decrease that easily.

Your pointlessly gigantic body seems to be your downfall. There is probably no way you can be saved in this situation.

That being said, I am also getting tired. At this rate, if I continue to deal with the Giant Centipede's toughness, it doesn't seem like I can hold out. I hope that it will kick the bucket soon.

From behind, I tackle it to change its direction, leading it towards the big hill where the Giant Centipede and I had collided earlier. I accelerate at once to take advantage of the angle at the peak. While grabbing the Giant Centipede, I flew into the air. Currently, the Giant Centipede's weight has instantly dropped by one third due to its successful 'cutting' diet. If it weighs this much, it can be lifted a little bit.

The body of the Giant Centipede completely floats in the air. Of course, I can't hold it for long, so it only floats for a few seconds. Our altitude drops quickly, the head of the Giant Centipede scrapes against the ground, and the carapace on its head is shaved off.

As I am becoming unable to support it as I fly, I twist my body to overturn the Giant Centipede.

“Ji, jijijiji..... jii.....”

An unpleasant sound comes from the Giant Centipede, as it becomes weak. The movement of its multiple legs begin to slow. After all, it seems that it no longer has enough strength to raise its body.

Race: Giant Sand Centipede

Condition: Blood Loss (large)

Lv : 64/80

HP : 7/463

MP : 98/244

Remaining HP..... 7? Finally, the Lord of the Desert lays its back on the ground.

When I think about this fellow, I’ve had a long relationship with him since I came to the desert.

I’d never held feelings other than hostility and fear for the Giant Centipede, however I’m now vaguely experiencing some other feelings.

Maa, minimal feelings were there. Giving it a quick death to end its suffering is the least I can do.

I get onto the belly of the Giant Centipede, kick off from the carapace, and fly directly upwards. Pushing against the air with my wings, I aim for even a little bit higher. When I reach the limit, I tuck my tail, limbs, and head into [Roll] and turn with full power. In that state, I descend aiming at the belly of the Giant Centipede.

Umu, I will call this technique [Wrecking Ball Drop]. God’s Voice-san, add this skill.

I gradually increase in speed using gravitational acceleration and crash into the Giant Centipede’s belly.

Chapter 175

Colossal Experience Points

“Dugong!”

[Resistance skill [Fall Resistance] level increased from 5 to 6]

I receive a huge backlash from the belly of the giant centipede and my body is blown off. [Roll] naturally unravels in midair, and I end up with the front of my body scraping against the ground.

I was prepared, but my entire body is outrageously sore. If it isn't enough, ending the suffering of the giant centipede isn't something I can do. I clear away the sand with my hand, open my eyes and look forward.

It didn't break the shell, but it appears that I have made a dent. From the severed part of the giant centipede, its insides are flowing out more and more.

[1536 experience points obtained]

UoU... as one would expect of the giant centipede. As expected the amount of experience points is pretty high.

[Title Skill [Walking Egg:Lv-] activated, 1536 bonus points obtained]

Aa, is that so? Experience points were doubled. I was overwhelmed by the number 1536 and forgot. Thank you giant centipede. I've had various grudges, but with this at the very least I can offer you much thanks.

[[Evil Plague Dragon] level has risen from 44 to 57]

Yosh, I increased 13 levels all at once! With this the next evolution is near. From now on, I need to start accumulating good deeds. I wonder if there are any lost people somewhere? Not that there were many humans who could survive in this desert anyway.

[Title Skill [Big Eater (Giant Killing)] level increased from 1 to 3]

[Title Skill [Pest Killer] level increased from 3 to 4]

My titles increased too? Getting two rank ups is unexpected, you know. Maa, the giant centipede would normally win ten out of ten times. Yet such unreasonable successes were achieved multiple times.

[Characteristic skill [Presence Sensing] level increased from 4 to 5]

Oh, [Presence Sensing] also increased? Please don't, [Dragon Scale Powder] and [Plague Breath] please don't increase..... Speaking of desires, [Flight], [Dragon Scales], and [Automatic HP Recovery], I'd be saved if those would increase however.....

.....

..... aa, is this the end? What with this, even though I feel like it always comes smack me when I'm not paying attention, it almost never strikes when I'm on guard. As I thought, it's not playing around with me, I guess it is God's Voice-san.

I would appreciate the [Wrecking Ball Drop] Skill already, OK? I'm somewhat disappointed. What, is the name decided by me or you? I'm not certain, [Nutcracker] was accepted however.

Well, that's fine? Should I check my status?

[Irushia]

Race: Evil Plague Dragon

Status: Normal

Lv : 57/75

HP : 218/365

MP : 162/256

Attack: 319

Defence: 241

Mana: 229

Speed: 212

Rank: B-

Characteristic skill:

[Dragon Scale: Lv5] [Voice of God:Lv4] [Gurisha Language:Lv3]
[Flight:Lv5] [Dragon Scale Powder:Lv5] [Dark Attribute:Lv-]
[Evil Dragon:Lv-] [Automatic HP Recovery:Lv3] [Presence Sense:Lv5]

Resistance Skill:

[Physical Resistance:Lv4] [Fall Resistance: Lv6] [Hunger Resistance:Lv4]
[Poison Resistance:Lv5] [Loneliness Resistance:Lv6] [Magic Resistance:Lv3]
[Dark Attribute Resistance:Lv3] [Fire Attribute Resistance:Lv2] [Fear Resistance:Lv2]
[Oxygen Deficiency Resistance:Lv3] [Paralysis Resistance:Lv3] [Illusion Resistance:Lv2]

Normal Skill:

[Roll:Lv7] [Status Check:Lv6] [Scorching Breath:Lv5]
[Whistle:Lv1] [Dragon Punch:Lv3] [Plague Breath:Lv4]
[Poison Fang:Lv3] [Paralysis Claw:Lv4] [Dragon Tail:Lv2]
[Roar:Lv2] [Star Fall:Lv2] [Nutcracker:Lv3]
[Human Transformation:Lv4] [Kamaitachi:Lv3] [Neck Breaker:Lv3] [Rest:Lv1]

Title Skill:

[Son of the Dragon King:Lv-] [Walking Egg:Lv-] [Klutz:Lv4]
[Fool:Lv1] [Infighter:Lv4] [Pest Killer:Lv4]
[Liar:Lv2] [Evasion King:Lv2] [Spirit Relief:Lv8]
[Tiny Hero:Lv5] [Path of Evil:Lv6] [Disaster:Lv5]
[Chicken Runner:Lv3] [Chef:Lv4] [Mean King:Lv4]
[Guts:Lv2] [Big Eater (Giant Killing):Lv3] [Ceramic Craftsman:Lv4]
[Boss of the Crowd:Lv1] [Laplace's Interference Authority:Lv1]

Okay, it rose quite well. Nonetheless, I still have not reached to *that* Hero's level.....

Now what was the status of that fellow again? If I recall correctly his HP was more than 600, and all the other stats were around 350. About the only one that even comes close to competing with him is attack power, huh? No, that guy was also holding a sword. By including the sword, would it not go to 400 or over?

I still have to further raise my level. I don't think there are any fellows stronger than the giant centipede..... And thus, there are many fellows of moderate strength. I guess, there is the red ant's nest. Too bad for them, I'm not going with just the purpose to

destroy them.

Since those red ants are also considerably strong. I can't go until after I'm prepared.

The day is already late, I will join the ball rabbit after eating a little and gathering the monster parts, from there I should sleep.

But, before moving.....

“GUuoo!”

[Rest]!

Light wraps around my body, my body's pain is slightly reduced. It is not necessary because I do not have any severe wounds due to [Automatic HP Recovery], but I need to practice. When it is possible to recover only a little bit in case of an emergency, I'll raise its level to increase the chances of getting more evolution possibilities.

“GUuoo! GUuoo!”

[Rest]! [Rest]!

Umu, as expected, restoration magic is good. Somehow it feels like my heart has been cleansed. It may just be my imagination.

[Normal Skill [Rest] level increased from 1 to 2]

Yosh yosh, because I am an evil dragon I was worried that the skill level of [Rest] would not increase, but that does not seem to be the case.

Chapter 176

Meeting Up

While staying aware with [Presence Sense], I retrace the path that my game of tag with the giant centipede had led me down. I don't expect either the ball rabbit or Adofu to have moved from where I left them.

I can't see anything when using [Roll], so I occasionally fly up and look into the distance while proceeding through the desert.

On the way, I rest in the vicinity of some cacti and come across a three-headed camel. As luck would have it^[1], I got both water and meat as a package deal. I mercilessly attack it with [Kamaitachi], so I could serve the three-headed camel as a present for ball rabbit and Adofu. Sorry, three-headed camel. Here, the weak are meat for the strong to eat.

On my third flight, I spot a dirty-looking swamp in the distance. That is the slug's territory. Nonetheless, when I saw it earlier on the way over I thought that it was a beautiful lake. So that must mean that [Mirage] was dispelled while I was fighting the giant centipede.

By any chance, are the ball rabbit and Adofu over there? It became a good landmark. Even slugs are occasionally useful. Did they defeat the slugs with that in mind? Knowing the ball rabbit, it is possible.

Approaching the swamp, ball rabbit and Adofu come into sight. Looks like they made a water supply by purifying a section of the swamp with [Clean]. Adofu heard my footsteps and turned his head this way.

"You've come back? It seems you went to raise your level."

Oou, hearing the word 'level' from a human, I feel a little shocked. That Hero also possesses [Status Check], surprisingly it's more common than I thought.

"To be blunt, it's impossible. You can't catch up to him in just a few days. Irushia is strong. He was going fairly easy on me as well, but you saw how it went. Sure, he used

some underhanded tricks, but even without those I couldn't have won anyway."

Normally that would be true, but I have my double experience cheat from [Walking Egg].

If I go all out with enough force to destroy the ant's nest, even if catching up to him will be difficult... I should be able to take him down in one shot while he's being careless.

However, it is tough to explain this to Adofu..... Also, I have to go through ball rabbit.

If 'levels' have been introduced, then maybe I should consider that the knowledge of 'skills' have also become widespread? I don't have a clear understanding about this area at all. In that case, perhaps humanity also knows the true identity of [Voice of God]? Once things calm down, a part of me wants to examine that area.

"Therefore, leave it to me. You want to save that woman of the beastman tribe, right? Irushia believes that I am dead. Once a great number of people are gathered in the town square, I can refute Irushia's points. If I succeed, even the church will no longer be able to protect him."

We may share the same name, but I wish he'd stop calling out "Irushia, Irushia" repeatedly. Honestly, being lumped together with that guy does not feel good.

"Dragon, it would be better if you waited in the desert. I'll definitely bring her back, just watch."

If that would settle things smoothly I'd be all for it..... Though that hero most likely won't leave it that easily. Even Adofu, marching into Haranae on his own, might be seen as a criminal brazenly returning, and be immediately returned to prison without being heard out..... We also need to consider that.

To Adofu, does it seem like our chances of victory are much lower in the scenario where I enter Haranae? At that time, the country would fall into chaos, and if I look at it from Adofu's perspective, he might feel indebted towards me.

Whether or not Adofu was there, wasn't that Hero coming for me?

But assuming I let him take responsibility out of consideration for his feelings, if it doesn't go well, I won't be able to do anything. Sorry for diving into a place where there

are lots of people, but given the current circumstances I have no choice but to do so.

“GUuWAa”

Roaring, I spit out the cactus and camel from my mouth. Because I emphasized speed, I switched between walking on four legs and [Roll] while moving. I couldn't use my hands. Well, it should be fine if I pass it through fire.

“This is.....”

“GUuoo”

“Is this... okay to eat?..... Y-yeah, thanks.....”

“Pefuu.....”

Neither ball rabbit nor Adofu react very favorably.

W-what, aren't you hungry? I'll roast it, okay? It'll be fully cooked, alright?

I roast it with [Scorching Breath], evaporating the saliva. Ball rabbit eats it resignedly. Adofu also seems to get over it and eats a mouthful.

“GUuoo”

I call out to ball rabbit.

Oi, I've got something I want you to ask Adofu real quick. Is there anyplace a beastman slave could live in peace?

Ball rabbit removes its mouth from the camel head it was biting into, and turns towards Adofu.

“Pefuu”

[Nina, in peace, place to live, where?]

“Nina?”

Adofu asks, tilting his head. Then he remarks “Oh, that young girl?” and gives a small

nod.

“.....There isn’t.”

.....After all, I didn’t expect there to be such a convenient place. Even if she’s safely rescued, things are likely to become difficult after that. I hope I can disable [Dragon Scale Powder] when I evolve, though.

“.....necessarily no place for her to go.” *(ED: it’s a continuation of his previous line)*

Is there? What’s with that weird, overblown style of speech. You got me all anxious for nothing. However, Adofu seems to have difficulty saying it. Is there some problem with it?

“However, I don’t think a dragon will be able to enter.”

Oh, that? That’s unfortunate..... but I was already prepared for that a long time ago.

Adofu continues speaking after seeing my reaction.

“Near Haranae, there is a country named Ardejia. It seems that recently, Ardejia has been forming treaties with countries where lots of beastmen live, and since they’d benefit from an undisturbed relationship between their countries, they, unlike Haranae, don’t treat beastmen as slaves, and are working towards their liberation. As for Ardejia, if they hear that she’s an escaped slave from Haranae, I think they would gladly shelter her.”

I see, in that case taking Nina there is an option.

I have Adofu draw me a map in the sand. To get to Ardejia from here, pass through Haranae and proceed in a straight line from there. You wouldn’t be able to miss it even if you started on the opposite side.

“GUuoo”

While you’re at it, let’s think about our future immigration too. Because after making an appearance at Haranae, living out in the desert is also likely to become difficult. Somewhere with not that many people and plenty of nature would be nice. Since the desert has been quite arduous.

“Pefuu”

[Us too, future immigration, you consider. People, few. Food, tasty]

Well food is important you know.

Hearing ball rabbit’s translation, Adofu adds more to the map in the sand.

“East from Ardejia there’s a large river, and beyond it there’s an enormous forest. It’s said to be a dangerous place where many heroes have met their end..... I think that’s the only place around here that satisfies your conditions. This area is dense with countries surrounding the desert.”

A forest along a river.....? Is it perhaps, the forest where the black lizards are? It is said to be an enormous forest, the likelihood that they’re related is high.

“There are hardly any people, it’s just that..... a dangerous race known as the Lithuvar^[2] tribe, classified as a demon tribe, is said to live there. I don’t know the full details, I hear they are few in number, so it isn’t likely that you will encounter them in that great forest.”

Ehh..... well then, is that no good.....?

But other than that, are there only places where people come and go frequently? I can clearly see soldiers being dispatched right away again. I guess it’s the number one candidate after all..... And the stronger the enemy, the easier it should be to gain experience.

“As far as the others are concerned, you’d be going in the opposite direction. This way might be safe. You’d have to pass through a country in the middle of a civil war, but this...”

Personally, I think I’ll pass on that direction..... Is this world nothing but dangerous places?

Chapter 177

The Ianians

The next day, I wake up beside the swamp. My fatigue is completely gone.

We only have three more days before Nina is executed at Haranae. It'll be difficult, but I'd like to be able to evolve either by today or tomorrow. For today, my goal is the red ants. On top of each red ant being C-rank, there are a lot of them. It's just a mountain of experience points. As far as the potential experience points go, I expect to get more from this than I did from the giant centipede.

Although... even the giant centipede looked like it was on the verge of dying back there, when the ants crowded around it and drove it into a corner. It's obvious that if I foolishly jump into the ant's nest without some sort of plan, I'm going to be quickly mobbed to death. I managed to greatly increase my level yesterday, but my stats are still far from the giant centipede's.

The most number of ants that I know that I can fight at once is three. I don't know if I can take on four at once. And I'm almost certainly going to die if I try to face five. If I manage to get myself surrounded by a horde of them like the giant centipede did back then, then I'll be unable to escape and I'll die. It's incredible that the centipede even managed to get away alive. I can honestly respect it for that. It truly is the Lord of the Desert. No, wait, I defeated it.

Should I steadily defeat the ants as they come out of their nest to raise my level instead? If I evolve and my stats go up significantly, I might be able to just charge right through the nest of ants. But I wonder if I'll be able to make it in time then... If I'm cautious about this I may become painfully short on time. Don't those guys move as a group pretty often?

Oh yeah, now that I think about it, I did breathe [Plague Breath] on them. I wonder if that weakened them? Maybe not; given the distance that I moved away from them after I used it that time, there's a good chance the curse's effect will have dissipated by now. Surprisingly, even this way of thinking might not be too bad.

I seem to recall a way of exterminating ants from my previous life where you'd use

poisoned bait. The bait would kill them all in a single stroke after they'd bring it back to their nest. Ants do have a habit of bringing food back to their nest and sharing it among their colony.

We're gonna need a huge amount of meat in order to carry out this plan. There is that giant centipede that I just defeated. I can use its meat. I can strip off the meat from its carapace to make insect dumplings, then alter them with [Poison Fang] to complete my poison bait. Afterwards, it'll be good enough to put it near the ant's nest.

With my [Poison Fang] being only Lv 3, I don't think this much will kill them, but I'd appreciate it if it did.

What if poisoning them from a distance doesn't cause my level to rise? Maybe if I'm not going through the experience myself, it won't give me experience points? Back when I was helping to level the ball rabbit, I was getting fewer experience points than I expected, and I came up with a contribution-based point distribution theory.

If I can weaken them with poison, I wonder if it's possible to take them all out at once? This plan will require lots of patience, and there's no guarantee that it'll go well. It's possible that the poison won't spread very well, and if they're weakened, I may get fewer experience points.

Because I'll need to wait and see, it may only result in a lot of time being wasted. There is a high amount of uncertainty and time is tight. This is definitely a high risk plan. And yet, because of that, the reward ought to be suitably huge. In the first place, there's no such thing as a safe way for me to level up rapidly.

With Adofu and the ball rabbit accompanying me, I immediately return to the place where I had defeated the giant centipede. We found one half of the giant centipede half-buried in the sand.

"Wow, you actually brought down that giant centipede?! That huge thing is split right in half!"

Adofu shouts in excitement. No, it was the centipede's own centipede-beam that split itself right in half. I'll be troubled if you start expecting such feats of strength from me.

I see hyena-like beasts that I had seen before gathering close by the giant centipede. Just like before, there are eight of them. If I recall correctly, their species should be called Ianian?

There are two large ones, four medium-sized ones, and two small ones.

“Aeh!” “Avue?”

They appear to be in high spirits after seeing what’s left of the giant centipede. Reacting just like Adofu, is it rare to see a giant centipede die by being split right in half? Nah, that’s not the impression I’m getting. Either way, they have a pleasant atmosphere around them from coming across such a feast.

Ianians, their flesh looks to be tender and they look like they’d be quite delicious if I were to eat them. However, seeing such innocence drained me of the will to attack. They’re so family-like.

“Aeh...”

That Ianian cub, it’s so cute. While looking at the giant centipede with its big round eyes, it uses its front paw to scratch at the forehead of the centipede. Ohh, that gesture it just made. I seriously want to keep it as a pet.

Back when I was still a kid dragon, if I had squatted and rubbed my eyes with my hands, instead of waving them, even Douz might have come running over with a smile. No, maybe I still have a chance? I’ll give it a try the next time there’s an opportunity.

They’ll probably run away if I try to approach them, so I guess I’ll just watch them from afar for a little while. The meat is not going to run out anytime soon, so they can eat if they want to. I’d rather refrain from eating the centipede anyways. I somehow managed with the caterpillars, but that thing? No way! The number of legs... does it have something to do with that? The caterpillars had a lot of legs too.

“Pefu Pefu!”

I can hear the ball rabbit protesting behind me.

[No! Not move soon! Less food!]

...Do you actually want to eat that? You may want to stop right there. It’s just my narrow viewpoint, but I think it tastes like leather boots.

I ignore the ball rabbit’s complaints and continue watching the Ianian family without getting any closer.

“Aea...”

The Ianian cub manages to cut into the giant centipede with the claw on its front paw and gouges out a small piece of the centipede, giving the sample a sniff. Yes, yes; eat, eat. I will hold back this little ball of appetite. It's a special exception.

“HggchhhI Scheeew!”

The Ianian cub sneezes and hides its face away. It rubs the paw that has a chunk of the giant centipede on it against the sand. The parent Ianian shakes its head slowly, walking away in the opposite direction from me.

The four medium-sized Ianians have not yet given up, and went up and sniffed the cross-section of the giant centipede, but like the Ianian cub, they violently sneezed. After that, they spit it out and start following behind the parent Ianians. Ahh, what the hell are they doing!?

But, why? I wonder if it smells extremely bad, that part. Though if it was that intense, they should have noticed it the moment they got close...

Has it become rotten by any chance? No, it should be acceptable enough for a wild animal, even if it rots a little. In any case, it appears to be smelly enough to ruin the Ianian's appetite.

Is this going to be good enough? Will I really be able to bait red ants with this?

Chapter 178

Centipede Dumpling

I approach the half of the centipede after the Ianians leave. I place the tip of my nose up against the cut section and sniff it.

It smells like, how do I describe it... rotten fish. Not enough to call it intense, but definitely like rotten fish. It would probably make someone vomit if they were to attempt to eat this.

It resembles the smell of the slugs from the swamp. This thing is totally not something meant to be eaten. It's no wonder the Ianians spat it out and ran off.

The ball rabbit approaches the cut as well and licks it. It makes a face then eats some sand. I presume it's to get the taste out of its mouth. It would seem that it simply is that bad.

I drag the half of the giant centipede to within the vicinity of the red ant's colony. I then cut open and hollow out some of the centipede with my claws and roll it up into a dumpling. It is as grotesque as one would expect it to be. I regret not being able to come up with a better plan.

The smell is much stronger and disorienting. It is impossible to hold back tears now.

The ball rabbit is reluctant to help me make dumplings, but it helps me anyways. It knows this has to be done if we are to even have a chance at saving Nina. Using both ears to knead, it expertly makes dumplings at a rapid pace. Its ears are precise and dextrous. In fact, it's making dumplings faster than me.

Hm, I wonder... how many pieces should I make? If I recall correctly, the number of ants in a colony can range anywhere from a few dozen to millions, depending on the species. If the red ant colony's population is over 10,000, then I don't feel like I'll be able to rival them with my meager ability no matter how hard I try.

Basically, it is said that there is a tendency for the average strength of an individual ant in a colony to be inversely proportional to the size of the colony it's from. However,

I do not know if my common sense will actually hold true in this world. In the first place, if the ants' numbers were proportional to their strength, then the entire colony would hilariously be comprised of a single Queen Ant.

When I first entered the red ant's colony, there were, what, twenty ants attacking me? There were also about thirty ants swarming the centipede. So, what, we've already confirmed fifty ants just from that short encounter alone?

But since only two ants came to scout at the beginning, maybe fifty really is the colony's total number of fighting forces? Well, that's what I want to think it is. Considering the size of the ants' abdomens, I'm certain that not a single one was a queen. Since I've never seen them outside of the nest, I must consider the possibility that there are somewhere around a thousand ants.

...Well, I'm gonna be optimistic and say that there are around a hundred ants.

So let's go with making a hundred dumplings out of this huge centipede here.

Oh crap... some centipede got in the gaps in my claws. Damn it! I can't take this anymore! They already smell like rotten fish. What if the smell sticks around even after I evolve? Oh, maybe I can get the ball rabbit to use [Clean] on my claws to get rid of this stench.

Adofu doesn't seem to understand what we are doing, he just stares at us with his mouth slightly agape.

"What exactly is it that you're doing? Are you going to eat that?"

I want to tell him 'Hell no', but considering there's seemingly no one else around to make these for, it's understandable that we'd be misunderstood. So ball rabbit, if you could explain, please?

"Pefu"

[Poison dumplings, make. You help]

"Um, uh huh..."

Adofu shows a face of disgust, but eventually he consents and begins to help us make dumplings. I was able to befriend Nina quickly, and I can order Adofu around; this is

all thanks to the ball rabbit's strong social skills and high-level telepathy. It's ironic to think that something called an "Evil Dragon" is protecting all three of them. From an objective perspective, that last one would be the most amazing. I guess you can't unreservedly judge someone's heart based on their appearance or the name of their species.

After an hour of work, we finally complete all one-hundred dumplings. Adofu and the ball rabbit's eyes look completely lifeless at this point. Mine probably do as well, but we did it. We finished making all of them. The only thing we have to do now is to carry this to the red ants' nest.

...At this point, it still smells strongly of rotten fish, but will the red ants really eat this? They look horribly grotesque. Even licking such a thing could induce vomiting. After spending so much time between the three of us to transport the giant centipede and to make dumplings, it'd be no laughing matter if it all ends up going to waste in this situation.

...Hmm? That's right, just making regular dumplings is pointless. There's no point unless I use [Poison Fang] to add poison to them, one-by-one.....

Each centipede dumpling is made by forcibly kneading the hard body of the giant centipede. To be honest, its body was overly tough, so they're pretty misshapen.

Well, I guess I'll just have to bite into them one at a time. I can't think of a better way right now. I'm going to have to firmly bite into these so that they're soaked with poison.

T-This thing already looks poisonous even before I bite into it. I've just got to tell myself that I'm going to be okay. No, I'm most definitely going to suffer by going through with this. I don't even have to bite into it to figure that out.

...Well, let's try eating one of them first. If I get some kind of anomalous status from this, then I won't have to bite the rest of them.

I close my eyes and squeeze my nose shut with my right hand. I proceed to pick up a dumpling with my left hand and toss it into my mouth.

"P-Pefuuu-!?"

[N-no way!? Why eat!?!]

There's a time when a man just has to do it, little Peach Ball Rabbit.

The taste of the centipede dumpling is clearly the worst. Even with my nose plugged, the peculiar rotten fish-like flavor was overwhelming my mouth. It felt like it was just trampling my tongue to death.

Looking back, I have eaten quite a variety of things since I've become a dragon. Among them, this definitely has the most foul odor and taste by a long shot. It was the most awful of awful things I've ever tasted, the king of awful tastes.

It was mysteriously astringent and it made my tongue recede into the back of my throat. I knew it, this thing absolutely must already be poisonous. I can feel the contents of my stomach starting to come up. I hold my mouth firmly closed and desperately try to bear with it.

Can I just spit this thing out already? No, unless I try it myself, I won't know if these things are toxic enough. I swallow the dumpling in one large gulp and check my status.

[Irushia] Species: Evil Plague Dragon

Status: Normal

Lv: 57/75

HP: 365/365

MP: 256/256

My status was completely normal. I guess I have to use [Poison Fang] on these after all.

I eliminated every unnecessary thought from my mind and proceeded to bite into the centipede dumplings one by one.

I feel like I could fall over at any second at the tenth dumpling.

I'm starting to delude myself into thinking that they are delicious at the twentieth.

I realize that it was just my imagination at the thirtieth.

[Normal Skill [Poison Fang] increased from Lv 3 to 4]

I'm approaching enlightenment at the fortieth.

My consciousness is waning at the fiftieth.

I'm starting to see the other world at the sixtieth.

[Title Skill [Guts] increased from Lv 2 to 3]

I somehow remember a saying about going through intense hardships at the seventieth.

The taste has become completely incomprehensible at the eightieth.

At the ninetieth, it feels like I'm just doing it out of habit.

The moment I bite into and finish the last piece, tears begin streaming down my face.

[Normal Skill [Poison Fang] increased from Lv 4 to 5] [Level of Title Skill [Guts] increased from Lv 3 to 4]

I did it... I finally did it... With this, all that's left is to bring them all to the red ants' nest.

Chapter 179

Five Red Ants

I scout around the perimeter of the red ants' nest to look for any ants. As usual, I'm having Adofu and the ball rabbit wait on standby in the distance.

The plan won't start until we grab the centipede dumplings and bring them towards the nest.

The problem is that simply carrying the dumplings to the nest by hand is impossible. It's just too much to carry, but taking them near the nest would be too suspicious.

I could try catching a red ant and forcing it to take a dumpling back to the nest. I can only pray that I can get my hands on a red ant like that though, so that plan won't really work.

Honestly, there's a high chance that they'll just spit out the centipede dumplings like the Ianians did and just leave them alone. Rather, since they're poisoned, the possibility of that happening is much higher. If I were a red ant, I definitely would not carry something as disgusting as this back to the queen. It would be considered as *lèse-majesté* and I'd be beheaded on the spot. The nest would be filled with the stench of the centipede.

Back in my original world though, I have seen ants carrying even grasshoppers back into their nest quite a few times. I can eat dark worms, but I still can't stomach grasshoppers. I think that even one ant carrying back a single dumpling might inflict some damage upon the colony. So long as it actually takes it to the colony. At this point in time, I can't just dispose of this pile of centipede dumplings. It's too late to turn back now.

That centipede was truly strong. Even in death it still manages to inflict damage upon my very soul. It seems that I'll be tasting centipede no matter what I eat for a while. No, it's my fault for eating after all. I know that.

While I was scouting around, I saw a scorpion that is about three meters long being surrounded by some red ants. I quickly duck behind some rocks and observe.

The scorpion was gray with two front claws, which are characteristic of a scorpion.

As for the red ants, I saw five. Included among the five is a red ant that I had previously wrestled with in their nest. Moreover, the formation that they took against the scorpion tells me that the fight is now over. The scorpion is already surrounded, there's no way for it to get out. Yeah, it's as good as dead.

The two red ants standing in front of the scorpion take turns performing feints to direct the attention of the scorpion towards themselves. The other red ants take the opportunity to bite the tail and legs of the scorpion from its blind spots. As soon as the scorpion redirects its attention to resist the ants behind it, the remaining ones go after it.

It's a dirty way to fight for sure, but it is quite effective. It keeps the damage to all members of the group to a minimum.

The scorpion was flipped onto its back instantly. The red ants surrounding the scorpion begin to quickly chew it into pieces, and it soon stops moving. It's survival of the fittest out here, and there is strength in numbers.

Well, let's take a look at its status.

Species: Big Scissor

Status: Deceased

Lv: 28/50

HP: 0/228

MP: 154/162

They killed a C rank monster in an instant! Whoa now. Hey. Should I really be starting a fight with these guys? One wrong move and I'll end up like that too. In their own way, they're stronger than the centipede.

The five red ants pick up the scorpion and start carrying it off.

Five, hmm... with that many in a group, if I charge in without any strategy, I might have the table turned on me. I just saw how they instantly killed that C rank monster, before it even had a chance to make a move. Sorry, but I refuse to make the same mistake as Big Scissor-senpai.

But wait, isn't it fine so long as I don't get surrounded? Thanks to the level boost I got from defeating the large centipede, my speed should now exceed that of the red ants by a significant amount. If it comes down to it, I could also fly away or use [Roll] to make an escape. If I fight skillfully, I can avoid being surrounded and mobbed to death, like Big Scissor-senpai was.

[Clay Gun] is just about the only long-range skill that the red ants have. If I need to escape, it may be possible to use [Kamaitachi] while getting away. It will be a prolonged fight due to the [Automatic HP Regeneration] skill the red ants have, but if I can focus on one ant at a time and take their numbers down to two or three, then I could take them all on at once. Alright, shall we begin?

I fly out in front of the red ants as they're carrying the scorpion and fire off [Kamaitachi]. It's important for me to figure out how much of the ant's HP I can shave off now, before I actually enter the battle. If possible, I would also like to take down one of them with this.

"Kucha!" "Kuchach!" "Kuchach!"

"Kuacha!" "Kuacha!"

The red ants are panicking big-time. Of course there's nothing else to expect.

I didn't want to attack while they were carrying their food back to their nest, but this is nature and there is no entitlement to such conveniences here. It's necessary to grab onto every chance I can get and to have nerves of steel so luck doesn't just pass me by. Forgive me, red ants.

Four of the red ants simultaneously abandon the body of the scorpion, which then falls over onto the fifth one who failed to move in time.

"Gucha!"

While I don't think that a single scorpion is something worth dying over, it's great that one of the ants is no longer able to move. Targeting the closest of the four ants in front of me, I quickly release [Kamaitachi] at it. Damn, they move better than I thought they would. They managed to avoid two of my attacks.

Yeah, don't stop now, wings. Now to send out the next [Kamaitachi]. With this I should be able to instantly close the distance.

“Kuacha!” “Kuacha!”

The moment the two foremost ants bark at me, two red sand bullets come flying towards me. There it is, the skill [Clay Gun]. I fly backwards in an exaggerated manner and avoid them. It is much easier to move around out here in the open than back in the nest where I couldn't move horizontally or vertically. Although, that's true for their side as well...

When the two ants in front of me shoot, the other two ants behind them follow up with [Clay Gun] and fire at me as well. I fly further back, but they anticipate where I'm going to land and fire some projectiles there as well. Since it's unavoidable, I guard myself with my wings.

Yeah, it seems that I'm at a little bit of a disadvantage in this shootout. However, the red ants don't have much MP. This is tough, but I should be recovering well with [Automatic HP Regeneration]. If I can withstand this shootout, they'll lose both their means of recovery and attack. Although it may be a dilemma, but it is also an opportunity. It's better to let them continue using [Clay Gun] than widening the distance between us.

I focus on avoiding their [Clay Gun], and reduce my usage of [Kamaitachi]. But, I'm unable to do that.

“Kuacha!”

One of them makes a mad dash towards me. Well, that's just great.

“Guuo!”

With a roar, I launch three [Kamaitachi]s at the red ant. It manages to avoid the first one, but the second one shatters the ground beneath its legs, hindering its movement. The third one hits the ant head-on, and it collapses head-first. Yes! just as planned!

In the mere moments my attention was focused on the ant that I just killed, the other three have spread themselves out wide. These guys, are they planning to attack me from all sides? When I try to close a gap in my defenses, they create another. It's a vicious cycle. They really are an unpleasant opponent to fight.

Chapter 180

Bullet Siege

The red ants come charging in from my left, right, and directly in front of me. Since they're no longer grouped together, it's going to take more time to fire off [Kamaitachi] to stop each of them. Don't these guys seem to cooperate too well?

I hightail it out of there, occasionally turning around to fire off [Kamaitachi] at them. I repel the [Clay Gun] that I can't avoid with my tail and wings instead. Receiving some damage is unavoidable. As long as I don't get hit on my torso, the damage won't be anything too serious. I also have [Rest] now.

The fourth ant, which had taken multiple blows from my [Kamaitachi], gets up and starts running towards me again. Shit, guess I should've finished it off even though that seemed a bit excessive. A four-on-one shootout is going to be fairly hard. These guys, they have the nerve to use their numbers to their advantage to shoot right at my weak points!

I'm struck with [Clay Gun] from my left, right, and behind almost simultaneously. Ugh, in perfect sync? If I'm too eager and rush in, I'll be exposing too many openings. I skilfully avoid the one coming from behind me and deal with the ones coming from my left and right with my wings and tail respectively.

The situation is not looking too good right now. Should I consider using [Roll] temporarily to shake them and regain my bearings? No, I have a lot of MP and HP this time. If I simply continue whittling them down like this with hardly any results, I won't be in time for the day of the execution. Over time, the waste of stamina will hurt.

There's currently quite a lot of space between each red ant. If I'm dealing with a single target, I can use a powerful skill to crush them. This scene could be the deciding moment of our bout. If I can crush just one, then only three would remain. The situation would improve considerably. Even though I'm going to take damage, it would be worth it to beat down one of them.

I ball my limbs up and transition to [Roll]. Believing that I'm planning to escape, the ants increase their pace. I swerve heavily and charge towards the red ant that's trying

to cut me off from the right side.

“Kuchaaa!”

The red ant fires its [Clay Gun] straight at me. Although I could avoid it, that would be time lost. The other red ants come running over. That will be troublesome. Increasing my rotational speed, I fling off the red sand bullets flying towards me.

And with that momentum, I send the red ant flying. The red ant is knocked backwards considerably, and I hasten my pursuit. That’s one hit! Now for the second! I follow up by tackling the red ant that is now in floating in midair. The red ant’s forelegs are mangled and part of its body is crushed.

“Gudji!!”

The defeated red ant spits out body fluids from its mouth, falling to the ground onto its back. I mercilessly roll right over it.

[416 experience points obtained] [Title Skill [Walking Egg: Lv -] activated, 416 bonus points obtained] [Level of [Evil Plague Dragon] has increased from 57 to 59.]

Yeah, first one down! Now this’ll get much easier.

Even though it couldn’t be helped, I focused too much on a single ant.

“Kucha!” “Kucha!” “Kuacha!”

While I was concentrating on bringing down the first red ant, the other red ants have surrounded me. It would seem that they’re going to shoot at me with [Clay Gun] from three directions.

The momentum of [Roll] has decreased sharply after colliding with the red ant multiple times. I have to accelerate again and regain my distance. With enough speed, I can fling off the sand bullets and suppress the damage done to me.

As soon as I attempt to increase my rotation speed, my body slips and falls down. Did the ground cave in? No, did they alter the terrain by using [Clay] to shift the sand? Does that mean that the narrow vision and linear trajectory of [Roll] is going to give me trouble?

Should I use [Roll] to force through my escape just like this? Nah, I think I'll try flying once again. I prefer it.

As soon as I stop rotating, three [Clay Gun] projectiles come flying towards me with no grace period for me to get into position. I can't avoid them. I can only knock them down with my tail and protect myself with my wings. I point my wings and tail forward and prepare to intercept them.

Hold on, I heard three sounds, but there are only two projectiles? Despite that thought, I defend myself against the first shot with my wing and knock down the second shot with my tail. From within the shadow of the second shot, the third sand bullet appears.

Oh, now you've done it.

I put my arm in front of me and attempt to repel the bullet with my claws. However, the sand bullet slips over my claws, jumping straight for my chest.

"Guuo!"

I take a sand bullet to my chest. The shot has considerable power behind it, but I can't afford to lose focus. If I get distracted by the pain, then I'm going to be violently killed like a plaything. I'll end up just like Big Scissor-senpai. I kick off the ground, escaping from the depression in the sand left by the red ants' [Clay].

Maybe it's because I overused my wings in guarding myself, but I can't fly as well as I usually can. It'll be all over for me if I lose my posture while in mid-air. I hastily land and hit the ground running on all fours.

"Kuchaa!" "Kucha!" "Kuchaaa!"

As usual, they've surrounded me on three sides while running parallel with me. I want to at least use [Flight] to get out of this formation.

One by one, I use [Kamaitachi] to repress them while I run. The red ants should be steadily growing weaker. They aren't shooting [Clay Gun] as much now. They're out of MP, huh. It's because they kept firing off skills like crazy even though their max MP isn't that high.

It was dangerous, but I can see that the ants will soon reach their limit. The ant that's running behind me to the right of me gets struck by [Kamaitachi] and collapses to the

ground onto its back. I thought that last one was a blow that it could avoid; was it at its physical limit too?

[400 experience points obtained] [Title Skill [Walking Egg: Lv -] activated, 400 bonus points obtained] [Level of [Evil Plague Dragon] has increased from 59 to 60.]

Did you die? You hung on pretty well. There aren't many ants that could take on a dragon to this extent. At least, I had not seen something like this in my previous life. Not that I remember much, but that much I can affirm. If such ants existed, Earth would be ruined.

Well, there are only two remaining? I consider using [Roll] again to put some more distance between us, but if it's only these two, I can beat them and win in the usual manner. I could take them out immediately.

Species: Red Ogre Ant

Status: Normal

Lv: 24/55

HP: 46/226

MP: 12/69

Species: Red Ogre Ant

Status: Normal

Lv: 26/55

HP: 55/230

MP: 8/71

Yeah, both their HP and MP are practically gone. I want to limit wasting my own MP as much as possible. Should I stop attacking while running away and instead try to finish them at once?



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